

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

VUEWEEKLY

NO. 603 / MAY 10 - MAY 16, 2007
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GOLDEN
FORK
AWARDS
2007

RESULTS
INSIDE!



GROW-A-ROW

URBAN GARDENERS GET DOWN AND DIRTY FOR THE FOOD BANK [ELLA JAMESON / 7]

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FILM



THE LUBICON LAKE INDIAN NATION / 5

"There is a myth about the kind of country that Canada is and the kind of people that live here, and then there is the reality." —Fred Lennarson, advisor to Lubicon Lake Indian Nation

AWAY FROM HER / 37

"I think there can be an art to screenwriting, but at the same time I find it difficult to equate screenwriting with the writing of novels or journalism or anything where the writing stands alone, because ultimately a screenplay is a blueprint and not a final work." —Sarah Polley, rising Canadian film maven

MUSIC



DOWN THE HATCH / 52

"That's all you really need to make a good album: a bunch of beer and *GoldenEye*. It really sort of takes the edge off being a month behind schedule, drinking and playing Nintendo 64." —Keelan Malo-Smith, drummer

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1) Don't Matter

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2) Girlfriend

Avril Lavigne

3) Paralyzer

Finger Eleven

4) Glamorous

Fergie

5) This Is Why I'm Hot

MIMS

6) Smack That feat. Eminem

Akon

7) This Is Why I'm Hot (Chorus)

MIMS

8) Super Mario Bros.

Super Mario Bros.

9) Beautiful Liar

Beyoncé & Shakira

10) The Hockey Theme

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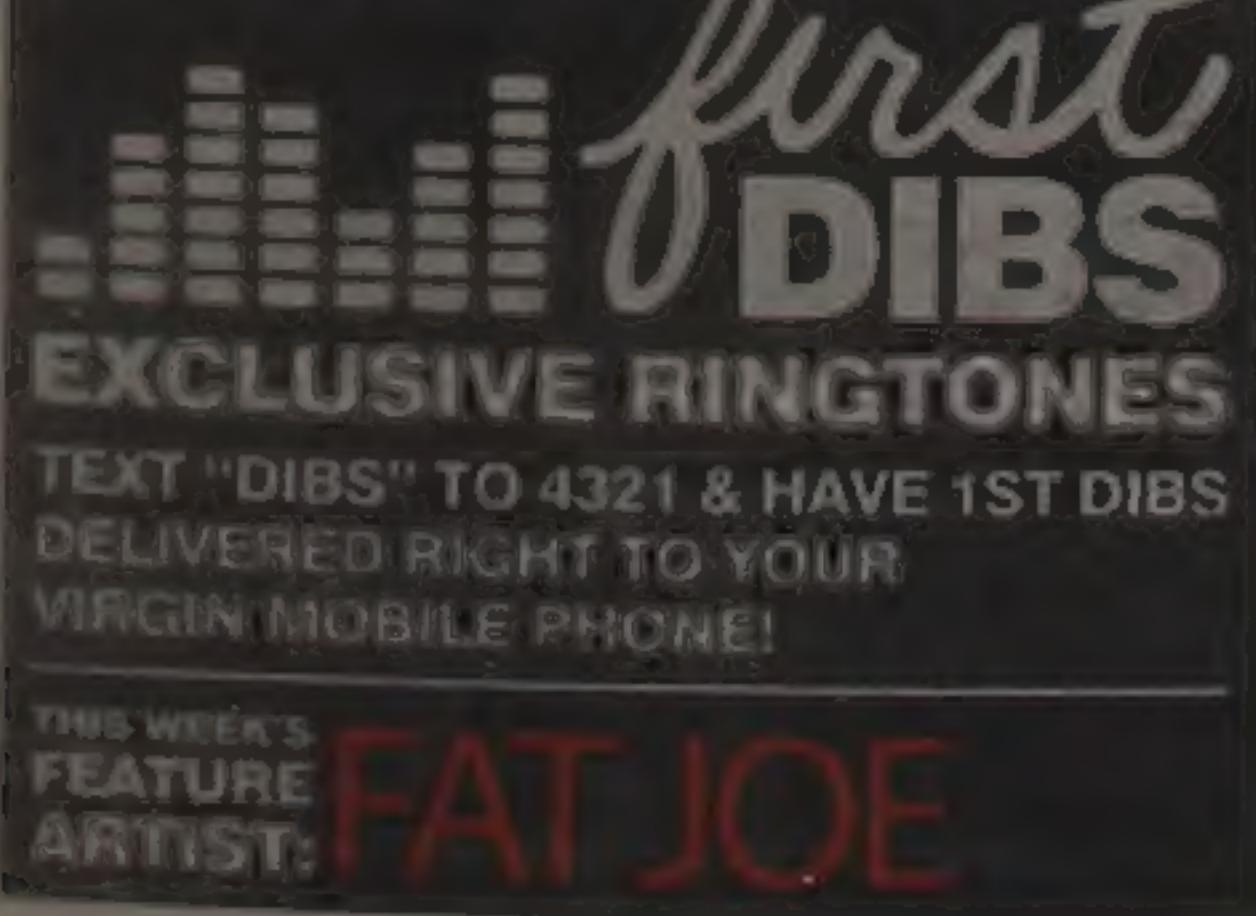
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The Parti is over

BRYAN BURTLES / bryan@vneweekly.com

On one hand, I kind of feel sorry for ol' André Boisclair. On the other hand, of course, he was intent on the destruction of our country, so I'm not about to shed a tear over his resignation.

When Boisclair blew the recent Québec provincial election, landing his Parti Québécois in third place, commentators everywhere jumped at the chance to blame the loss on Québec's lack of tolerance for Boisclair's homosexuality.

But that's not entirely accurate. André Boisclair lost the election for two reasons: first, the PQ is a nearly impossible party to lead, and, second, André Boisclair is a huge idiot.

The thing about the Pequistes is that, unlike nearly any other political party in Canada, they are united by one thing and one thing alone: sovereignty. They seem to disagree on every other issue that could ever come up in the political sphere. The PQ's membership includes neo-conservatives, disaffected liberals, anti-semites, some hippies, a bunch of communists and representatives of any political stripe you could imagine.

So one day they want private health care, the next day they don't. One day they're trying to force newcomers to learn French, the next day the ethnic vote lost them the referendum. The PQ runs around like a two-tailed dog most of the time; they only succeed when the feds do something completely atrocious to Québec, and they become the protest vote for many people.

And don't even get me started on Boisclair. From the very start he was a lightweight and a bit of a crybaby who had a flair for doing the wrong thing at the worst possible time.

Like the cocaine. Normally, it'd be a big "who cares" in laissez faire Québec, except that Boisclair was sniffing while he was in cabinet. Not smooth. Then he lashed out at journalists who were just doing their jobs by questioning him about it. And when everything seemed quiet for a couple of weeks, he had to screw himself by appearing in a *Brokeback Mountain* parody that featured Stephen Harper and George Bush as characters. The final straw was his public spat with highly respected sovereigntist Gilles Duceppe.

Many factors contributed to Boisclair's downfall, but it would be lazy and wrong to blame the Québec public for not being tolerant enough to accept him. The blame for Boisclair's electoral defeat and subsequent political demise rests with the Parti Québécois and André Boisclair. ▶

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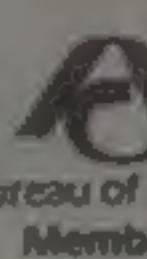
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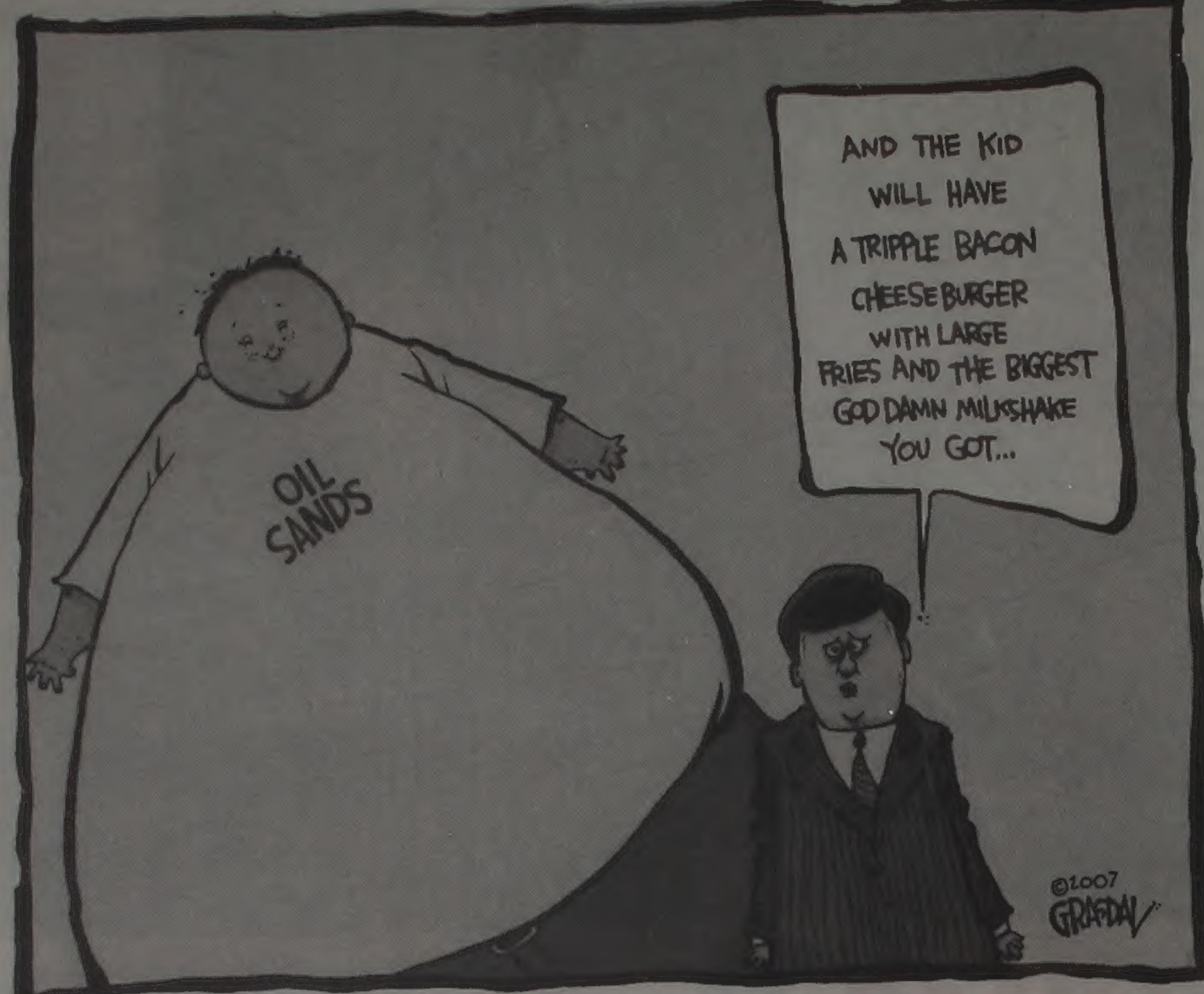
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MAIL LETTERS

MUSIC GOOD, MUSIC INDUSTRY BAD

Regarding Steven Sandor's latest column about the 35 per cent drop in music sales in Canada in the first quarter of 2007 ("Music is dead. Long live music!" Enter Sandor, May 3 - May 9), I thought this feedback might be interesting.

I haven't bought a major label CD since 2000, when the majors started suing their fans, and I was skeptical before that because of their involvement in the 1996 World Intellectual Property Organization treaties and the 1998 US Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

There are still CDs we buy, and I have an eMusic account, but I'm not going to pay money to a set of businesses that is trying to put a majority of my industry (I work in software) out of work. As much as they claim peer-to-peer copyright infringement hurts them, digital rights management or DRM (the imposition of software brands and locked down hardware onto those who don't infringe copyright) actually hurts us.

If the independent labels opposed to DRM who offer music in DRM-free formats didn't exist, I would purchase no music at all. I don't infringe music copyright; I support alternatives. I am glad that I'm doing my part to hurt the bottom line of Canadian Recording Industry Association, and will say good riddance when they get to a 100 per cent drop in sales.

RUSSELL MCORMOND

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (*Vue Weekly*, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by e-mail (letters@vneweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles published in *Vue Weekly*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

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AND THE KID
WILL HAVE
A TRIPPLE BACON
CHEESEBURGER
WITH LARGE
FRIES AND THE BIGGEST
GOD DAMN MILKSHAKE
YOU GOT...

Mayor predicts 'scary' tax hike

NEWS MUNICIPAL

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vneweekly.com

Edmontonians should brace themselves for a property tax increase of up to 10 per cent, according to Mayor Stephen Mandel.

The 2008 municipal budget will not be tabled until November of this year, but a report released on Tue, May 8 warns that inflationary pressure created by Alberta's economic boom means the city will have to come up with between \$57 million and \$76 million more than budgeted for 2007 simply to meet its current service commitment.

Mandel estimates this shortfall will force the city to hike taxes by eight to 10 per cent next year, which works out to an increase of about \$200 a year for the average Edmonton homeowner.

"You're starting off with what I see as a substantial challenge," Mandel said to city manager Al Maurer during a council meeting on Tuesday. "Given the amount of it, it's going to be scary." ▶



Alberta band endures government's 'continuing abuse'

DESPISE UN INVOLVEMENT, AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT STILL ELUDES LUBICON LAKE INDIAN NATION

GAVIN MEALING / gavin@vnewweekly.com

For the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation, a First Nations band living in and around the small community of Little Buffalo near the Town of Peace River in northwestern Alberta, the boom in Albertan black gold has not meant an opportunity for better living.

Almost a year after Canada responded to the United Nations (UN) for what the Lubicons have called a violation of human rights abuses in an ongoing struggle between the band and the government of Canada, there is no evidence of any change or forthcoming solution for the Lubicon.

This is, however, nothing new for the band of 500, with last year's complaint to the UN marking their fourth such attempt at voicing mistreatment, after a 1987 UN decision, the 1990 finding of the 38th session of the UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), and most recently at the 85th session

NEWS | FIRST NATIONS

of the UNHRC / 36th session of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR) in 2006.

The Lubicon's complaint hinges on the idea that they have been treated inequitably by the Canadian government, as they state in submissions to the UNHRC.

"Canada's continuing abuse of the human rights of the Lubicon people is also in violation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and in particular Section 5 of General Recommendation number 23 of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," according to the Lubicon's 2006 submission to the UN.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, on the

other hand, sees things differently. Chris Wilson, the negotiations support unit manager with the Canadian government's Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC), refutes any allegations of human rights violations.

"I'm not sure that the Canadian government's read [is] that we were in violation of anything," Wilson said. "The Lubicon filed something, we've responded, and the Lubicon have responded to our response, but the committee [UNHRC] itself has not issued any [recent] statement on the reports issued by the parties. We don't accept that allegation."

Fred Lennarson, an advisor to the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation, disagrees.

"There have been three human rights decisions pertaining to the Lubicon situation, holding Canada in violation of two international human rights covenants," Lennarson said. "Canada ignores them."

His explanation for this neglect points to larger problems as he illustrates the disparity between the actual and the perceived.

"There is a myth about the kind of country that Canada is and the kind of people that live here, and then there is the reality," he said. "Canada has been negotiating an indigenous charter of rights for 20 years with a bunch of other countries at the level of the United Nations, and at the end, voted against it saying they were afraid they were going to jeopardize rights that indigenous people in Canada already have."

"It's a transparent sham," Lennarson continued, audibly frustrated, "but they said they were concerned that it left undefined land rights."

So far, the UN has not yet responded to the Lubicon's most recent submission. And with negotiations at a complete standstill, tension persists between the federal government and

the Lubicon.

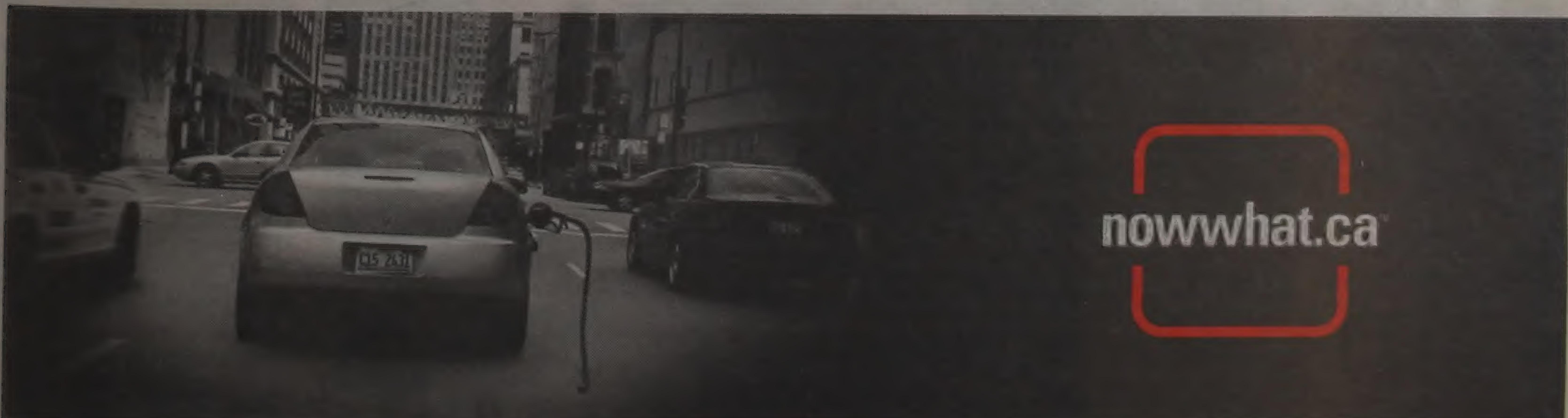
According to director of communications for the INAC, Glenn Luff, the two parties have halted talks for a couple of reasons.

"We haven't had a main table negotiation since November of 2003," Luff said. "There are two issues which are the major stumbling blocks: one is the issue of self-governance and the other is us agreeing on an appropriate level of compensation for the number of years that the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation has been without a land base and has benefited from that land base."

But the issues of self-governance and land rights are not so easily separated, Lennarson says.

"The government wants the Lubicon to cede the right to these lands and resources and agree to talk about self-government post settlement, and

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



the Lubicons refuse to do that," he explained. "The Lubicons have said that recognition of their right to be self-governing has got to be part of any settlement of Lubicon land rights."

LAND AND THE RIGHTS associated with it have been a longstanding matter for the Lubicon.

In 1899, when treaty commissioners with the Canadian government were attempting to group aboriginal peoples under various treaties, the Lubicons were passed over due partly to their location and the size of their population. Without a treaty, the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation stands out as a First Nations band that has comparatively little power over lands that they inhabit, which is unusual as negotiation of a treaty is the method for the taking of aboriginal land under Canadian law.

Not surprisingly, the Lubicons and the government of Canada disagree about the issue of control over the contested lands.

According to Luff, from the federal government's point of view, concern over land is at the heart of the confusion.

"When we're talking about the Lubicon [and] their traditional territory, which covers a considerably larger expanse of land, what you're really talking about here is provincial crown land," he said.

Wilson explained how the Lubicon

were stripped of any title they might have had to territorial lands.

"[The Lubicon] were missed at the time the treaty commissioners went into that territory, so Treaty 8 does in law extinguish title to the land," he explained. "That's not a position that the Lubicon accept, but it's the position of the government of Canada and the province of Alberta."

"The title to the entire area of Treaty 8 was transferred to the crown when the treaty was signed by the majority of aboriginal groups in the territory," Wilson added.

ESSENTIALLY, THE LUBICON have had their rights to the land taken from them without ever having signed a treaty with the Canadian government, according to negotiator Kevin Thomas. While Thomas agrees that the Lubicon's situation is complex, he cuts through to a key point in the conflict.

"Because of the long history, there's lots of events, but the underlying issue is quite simple," Thomas said. "Canada and Alberta have taken lands and resources that don't belong to them, and they've never—by their own laws—signed a treaty to get access to those lands and resources. They're in violation of the Canadian constitution until they come to the table and negotiate a treaty."

Thomas explained that the land that the Lubicon historically used and occupied was a 10 000-square-kilometre territory, based on community sites, grave sites, trails, hunting areas and trap lines. In his mind, the small

band's demands were not unreasonable.

"What they're talking about at the table is not to hold on to all the land and resources. They're talking about setting up a reserve of about 246 square kilometres or 95 square miles," Thomas said.

"So compare 4 000 square miles [10 000 km²] down to 95 that they're willing to set up as a reserve community. And on that reserve try to have some kind of economy to replace the hunting and trapping economy they had in the larger territory. And in turn also have some kind of resource base for their community to succeed economically in the future—something that replaces all the lands and resources they're giving up. That's, I think, eminently reasonable when you look at the 10 000 square kilometres and what's been given to Canada and Alberta from that land."

However, both INAC spokesmen disagree with Thomas's rationalization of the Lubicon position.

"Self-governance was an area where we had very different views and [haven't] come to an agreement, but we would like to," Wilson said. "The final one is compensation, and we've got a mandate that we feel is reasonable and fair with other settlements that we've achieved in Alberta, and the Lubicon have a different position."

"With respect to the lands that the Lubicon have asked for in the negotiations, we have holding reservations. The province has put in place holding reservations so that no development occurs on those lands," he added. "Now, with respect to the larger area referred to, it's just massive—we're talking about 900 000 hectares of land. That's roughly the size of the state of Maine, or the country of Prague [sic]—these are huge tracts of land."

The negotiations manager added that the Lubicon do have a platform for appeal.

"If a company were to try to develop in that area, the Lubicon have rights, just like anybody else to the Energy and Utilities Board (EUB)

process," Wilson said. "If they feel that they have some interest that's going to be compromised by development, they have every right to go to the EUB and raise that issue and seek some avenue of redress, and actually they've done that quite successfully."

WITHOUT A SETTLEMENT, the Lubicon see their land being eroded by corporate interest in the resource rich area, Thomas said, pointing to a massive disparity between what the Lubicons have been provided with and what has been extracted in terms of resources.

"We've calculated at minimum \$13 billion in oil and gas resources that have come out of there. [There are] well over 2 000 oil wells drilled up there," he explained. "They're just now starting to get into oil sands, forestry; they're looking for diamonds up in that area, we're talking—I want to say gold mine, but that's the only kind of mine there isn't there yet."

Despite this, engaging in bureaucratic process is not the only concern for the Lubicon. The federal government has provided the band with a "comprehensive agreement" (signed in Apr 2006), a yearly package of approximately \$3 million that goes towards services and programs.

Lennarson breaks down the numbers of the financial package that the Lubicon receive for government programs and services. He notes that half of the \$3 million goes to a school in Little Buffalo, \$800 000 of it goes to welfare at the rate of \$235 a month per individual, and \$140 000 of it is for housing for a community of 500 people—95 per cent of whom are on welfare.

"When you look at what it consists of, the Lubicons are essentially being given enough to maintain themselves in welfare dependence on subsistence," Lennarson said.

With minimal assistance, the Lubicon community struggles to meet their needs, according to both Thomas and Lennarson.

"I don't know if anyone else in

Alberta is able to do very much with \$140 000 in construction these days," Thomas said. "It's pretty damn hard to supply a community with decent housing with that amount of funding. So the reality is they have terrible housing, they have no running water, which is an issue—they have to drive an hour to Peace River to get water. They have had problems with things like tuberculosis, which has re-emerged in the last year."

WHILE THE LUBICON continue to appeal to larger groups like the UN, both sides continue to avoid the negotiating table. There is, however, hope that the stalemate is not a permanent fixture in Canadian and First Nations relations.

Thomas hints at the possibility of a new round of negotiations.

"There's been sort of murmurs of trying to get back to the table. I think the current Indian Affairs Minister [Jim Prentice], when he was in opposition, was quite clear that negotiations should restart," Thomas explained. "The circumstances haven't changed since he became minister, but he hasn't begun negotiating yet. I am hopeful that he's making some moves in that direction. We can only hope that they come to their senses and get this taken care of."

Luff says that the government is optimistic about resolving matters with the Lubicon, adding that there is a precedent of success in dealings with First Nations.

"For some reason or other, we haven't been able to negotiate a land claim with the Lubicon. So our question is why haven't we been able to negotiate with the Lubicon, when we have sat down at the table in good faith, as we have with all other First Nations, using the same mandates and the same frameworks of negotiation," Luff said. "I have to throw that back at the Lubicon, and I think you should ask them the same question."

Unfortunately, Vue wasn't able to directly ask the Lubicon that question. Numerous attempts at contacting Chief Bernard Ominayak were unsuccessful.

Lennarson, an advisor to the Lubicon, mentioned that dealing with reporters is not necessarily a priority for the Lubicons.

"I was involved with trying to facilitate media communication with the Lubicons, but there were lots of problems on both ends, so I don't do it anymore," Lennarson said. "Frankly, I'd be pleased if the Lubicons were free with reporter interviews, but they aren't always."

Regardless, the Lubicon's situation marks an enduring lack of ability or desire to find solutions. At their base level, the problems associated with the case are deeper moral and ethical issues, according to Lennarson.

"It's a terrible situation," he admitted. "I think any decent human being would like to see it resolved in a way that enables the Lubicon people to survive and try and live their lives, raise their children, meet their responsibility, but certainly there's no indication for me that the Canadian government are prepared to meet their constitutional responsibilities, that are moral and ethical responsibilities or anything else." ▀



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If you bank on gardeners, they can Grow-a-row

COMMUNITY GARDENS GIVE URBANITES A CHANCE TO GET A LITTLE DIRTY

ELLA JAMESON / ella@vneweekly.com

I started planning my garden way back in February, carefully reading through the online catalogue from my favourite seed vendor. Consisting of two small raised beds, my vegetable garden is more a labour of love than a productive source for my larder.

Still, I enjoy every moment. I plan and create my small plot, tend the soil and protect it from marauding rabbits.

This year, many city gardeners—myself included—will add something special to their garden: a row of extra vegetables for the Edmonton Food Bank's Plant-a-Row, Grow-a-Row program.

Started in Winnipeg in 1986, Grow-a-Row caught on quickly across Canada and operates in most major cities. Locally grown produce is warmly welcomed and distributed. The Food Bank has accepted private donations of produce since 1998, and according to special events coordinator Tamisan Bencz-Knight, every bit helps.

With volunteer assistance from Our House, a local addiction recovery facility, the Food Bank will plant a vegetable garden of its own on Muttart Conservatory land donated by the City of Edmonton for the 10th straight year. As part of their recovery program, Our House clients grow and nurture a plant. Tending the Food Bank garden is a perfect fit for both organizations.

The 120-square-metre plot donated by the City is only one of several community gardens in Edmonton, however. According to Ashling Amato of the Community Garden Network, there are 63 garden sites associated with their group and over 2 500 adults, youth, children and seniors tending plots.

"Community gardens are becoming increasing popular for many reasons; one would be the increasing number of people moving into condos and apartments," Amato says. "There is just no room for a garden. People need to feel connected to the earth."

And most community gardens in the city donate a portion of their produce to the Food Bank each fall, she adds.

IN AN ENORMOUS warehouse south of the City Centre Airport, the Food Bank puts together hampers that serve 12 000 Edmontonians each month. In addition to the hampers, its meal and snack program provides for 250 000 individuals monthly through 160 different agencies, church groups and food depots.

Andy Kwak of the Edmonton Salvation Army reveals that this organization alone sees anywhere from 85 to 100 families in need of hampers each day. Kwak's organization also serves a hot breakfast to as many as 150 people, many of them children, every Friday. Without the support of the Food Bank, he says, providing these meals would be impossible.

The Food Bank is incredibly resourceful, gleaning and redistributing food products deemed "waste" by the local food industry. Dented cans



NEWS | FOOD

and torn boxes serve the needs of those having difficulty making ends meet. A food recovery program collects surplus from restaurants and hotels that would otherwise be thrown out. The Food Bank even accepts wild game meat from local hunters willing to share their quarry.

Fresh produce is primarily gleaned from over one hundred Edmonton-area grocery stores, but quantities fluctuate with the season. This is why contributions from individuals participating in the Grow-a-Row program are so important.

"Besides, fresh, locally-grown produce tastes much better," Bencz-Knight reminded me.

LINDSAY MCWHIRTER HAS been donating to the Grow-a-Row program for nine years. She grows fresh produce in her own garden, her mother's yard and in her church community plot. Some years, she has contributed as much as 60 kg of food. McWhirter feels that growing vegetables for those less fortunate helps teach neighbourhood kids about both gardening and philanthropy.

"Close to 50 per cent of the recipients are children," she points out.

Participation in the Grow-a-Row program is simple: just add an extra row of tubers to your garden this year. For me, it's potatoes. Dig hole, insert potato—nothing could be easier. In a few months, that small piece of potato will produce a wealth of food for those in need. ▶

WHAT CAN YOU GROW?

The Food Bank accepts any washed fresh vegetables or fruit, but root vegetables store the best. Potatoes, turnips, squash and carrots are easy to grow and provide significant nutrition. More difficult to store are peppers, tomatoes and beans, but they are gladly accepted if freshly harvested and brought directly to the Food Bank. Turn-around time is critical for items such as raspberries and peas, so the less handling the better.

That apple tree in the backyard—the one you never seem to have time to harvest in the fall—can provide bags of fresh fruit for families in need. Get a few friends together and pick it bare, then leave your treasure at one of four drop-off locations around the city. ▶

LET'S GET GARDENING

Volunteers are at the heart of the community garden movement. Whether ankle-deep in soil on their local plot or on patrol for reusable materials and building supplies, volunteers make things happen.

The Community Garden Network, a support and networking resource for the Edmonton area, relies on volunteers to help maintain and expand their own program and services. Board members meet monthly during the growing season to plan and act. Others donate their time by networking with community partners, building relationships that help procure materials and resources.

"Community gardens give people a chance to meet their neighbours and develop a sense of pride and ownership," says Executive Director Ashling Amato. "They actually lower the crime rate and reduce vandalism. They can really help seniors keep making a contribution to society as well as help immigrants feel welcome and learn how to grow things in this country."

Community gardens are sprouting all over the city. They're found on church lots, in residential backyards, along utility rights-of-way, in vacant downtown lots, city parks and even in a former rail yard.

The Clover Bar Waste Management Centre is home to a well-established community garden originally designed to showcase the benefits of compost usage. The site, largely supported by volunteer gardeners, donates hundreds of kilograms of produce to the Edmonton Food Bank every year.

The Victory Rooftop Gardens atop the Churchill Retirement Community downtown boasts over 100 containers. Growing both flowers and vegetables, resident seniors stay connected to the soil while beautifying their environment.

The Clareview Community EcoGarden supports 25 family plots. An involvement with EcoYouth, an educational program for children and youth ages eight to 21, has helped foster understanding of environmental practices. Week-long EcoCamps are held on site, teaching children about soil stewardship, composting and water ecology.

The Griesbach Veterans Community Garden in north Edmonton harbours 200 garden plots. Members promote the therapeutic value of gardening: stress reduction, light exercise and pride of ownership. A portion of the annual harvest is donated to the Mustard Seed Church, the Edmonton Food Bank and other charitable organizations.

Community gardens, large and small, are abundant in the city. Through horticulture, Edmontonians take advantage of the benefits of tending the soil, while contributing to the welfare of the people around them. ▶

How can 6.5 billion people continue to live on one world?

COMMENT

DYER STRAIGHT

Gwynne Dyer
gwyndyer@vneweekly.com

You look at the numbers and you think: "That's impossible." Uganda had about seven million people at independence in 1962, and in only 45 years it has grown to 30 million. By 2050, just over four more decades, there will be 130 million Ugandans, and it will be the 12th biggest country in the world, with more people than Russia or Japan. Its population will have increased 18-fold in less than 90 years.

Many people think that population growth is no longer a problem, and everybody somehow knows that it is politically incorrect to talk about it. Back in 1968, when Paul Ehrlich terrified everybody with his book *The Population Bomb*, it was seen as the gravest long-term threat facing the human race, but now it scarcely gets a mention even in discussions on climate change—as if the number of people producing and consuming on this planet had no relevance to how great the pressure on the environment is.

True, the population explosion has gone away in large parts of the world, in the sense that most developed countries now have birth-rates well below replacement level (2.1 children per woman) and that the global average, including the developing countries of Asia and South America, is now down to 2.3 children. That's pretty impressive, given that it was 5.4 children per woman as recently as 1970. But there remains the problem of

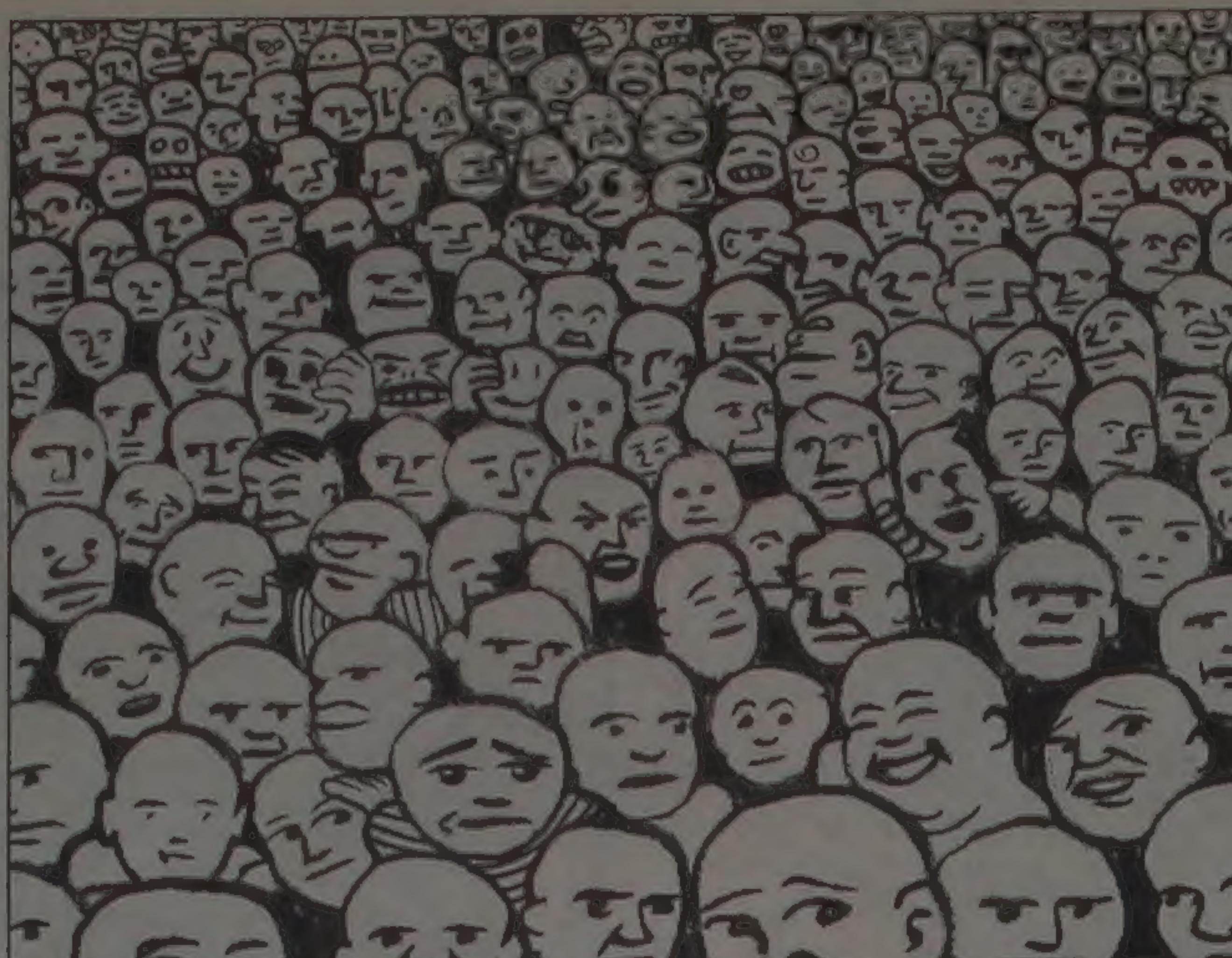
what you might call "inertial growth."

My own mother had five children, which was not seen as at all unusual at the time. (There was one year when Newfoundland, my birthplace, beat Guatemala for the honour of having the highest birth rate in the Americas.) The next generation of our family, by contrast, dropped to 2.0: we five brothers and sisters and our five spouses have had a total of just 10 children. But that doesn't mean that our population boom stopped.

If we had just spawned and died, it would have, but we insisted on living on after our children were born. In fact, we're all still here, although the first grandchildren are already starting to appear—so where there were once 10 of us, there are now 23. It takes two full generations at replacement level before the population finally stabilizes.

That accounts for about half of the anticipated population growth in the next 40 years, which will raise the total number of people on the planet from 6.5 billion to about nine billion. (In other words, we will be adding as many extra people as the total population of the world back in 1950.) But the other half of the growth comes mainly from Africa, already the poorest continent.

THIS MAY EXPLAIN WHY it became politically incorrect to talk about population growth around 25 years ago. Nine out of the 10 countries in the world with the highest birth rates are African (the other is Afghanistan), and it seems uncomfortably like pointing the finger at



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the victim. But runaway population growth is a big factor in making so many Africans victims, and it doesn't help to stay silent about it.

Sometimes the steadily worsening ratio of people to resources just causes deepening poverty, as in the case of Nigeria, whose population by 2050 will reach 300 million. That is the same as the current population of the United States, but Nigeria, apart from being virtually without industry, does not have one-tenth of the natural resources of the US. If those 300 million people live at all, they will live very badly.

Often, however, the growing pressure of people on the land leads indirectly to catastrophic wars: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Somalia, Congo, Angola and Burundi have all been devastated by chronic, many-sided civil wars, and all seven appear in the top 10 birth-rate list; Rwanda, Ethiopia and Mozambique, which have suffered similar ordeals, are just out of the top 10. Africa, which accounted for only eight per cent of the world's population when most of its countries got their independence in the 1960s, will contain almost a quarter of the world's (much larger) population in 2050.

This will have remarkably little impact on the global problem of climate change, since most Africans will still be very poor and have a very small environmental "footprint." They will be very poor mainly because their populations are growing three times faster than the average in the rest of the world, and you cannot say that this is nobody's fault. It is a failure of government.

The reason birth rates dropped in the rest of the world was that cheap, effective means of contraception became freely available and that child death rates plummeted. Once women realized that they didn't have to have many children in order that at least some would survive to adulthood, they took advantage of the contraception and brought the birth rate down with little urging from above. A few well-run African countries, like South Africa, have succeeded in stabilizing their populations in this way. The great majority have not.

Uganda's birth-rate is seven children per woman, little changed from 30 years ago. Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, believes that his country is under-populated, and told parliament last July: "I am not one of those worried about the population explosion. It is a great resource." He has done many good things for his country, but this one blind spot could undo them all. And he is far from alone. ▶

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears regularly in *Vue Weekly*.

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MANITOBA TORIES PROMISE TO BRING BACK THE JETS

NEWS POLITICS

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vneweekly.com

The Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba is hoping to score big political points with voters by promising to bring NHL hockey back to the province.

With polls indicating a close two-way race between the opposition Tories and incumbent Premier Gary Doer's New Democrats, PC leader Hugh McFayden has pledged that, if elected, his government would resurrect the Winnipeg Jets by 2011. A jersey-wearing McFayden held a media event on Mon, May 7 at ice level at downtown Winnipeg's 15 000 seat MTS Centre to announce that bringing back the Jets was number three on his list of "five things Hugh will do" should his party form the government following the May 22 vote.

"What we're saying is, 'Let's be bold again. Let's start to think optimistically about our future,'" said McFayden, insisting that the presence of an NHL team in the city could help stop young people from leaving Manitoba for higher paying jobs in other parts of the country, a problem that has become a major campaign issue in the election.

"We need to increase Manitoba's

cool factor if we want our young people to stay—the first step is to bring back the Jets," McFayden said. "Young Manitobans want us, expect us to do everything in our power to bring back the Winnipeg Jets."

THE JETS ARRIVED IN Winnipeg in 1972 as a part of the upstart World Hockey Association. When the league disbanded in 1979, the club joined the

"Young Manitobans want us, expect us to do everything in our power to bring back the Winnipeg Jets."

NHL, developing a rabid and dedicated fan base in spite of somewhat uneven success on the ice. As operating costs and player salaries ballooned in the '90s, the team struggled financially, and despite a "Save Our Jets" campaign by fans and civic leaders that raised over \$13 million in hopes of keeping the team in Winnipeg, in 1996 the Jets moved to Arizona and began play as the Phoenix Coyotes.

an existing NHL team to Winnipeg and have slammed what they call the Tories' "hypocrisy," pointing out that the party strongly opposed using public money to finance the MTS Centre. Premier Doer expressed his support for the idea of bringing NHL hockey back to the provincial capital, but dismissed his rival's pledge as petty pandering.

"And I'm gonna eliminate winter next year," he joked. ▶

Cop who Tasered jaywalker stays on the air

'COP TALK' CO-HOST'S USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE WON'T HURT HIS RADIO CAREER

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vneweekly.com

A local radio station has no problem with an Edmonton police officer convicted of assault with a weapon for using his Taser on a jaywalker continuing to co-host a Saturday afternoon radio program about policing.

Constable Aubrey Zalaski was found guilty in provincial court on Fri, Apr 27 of using "unnecessary" and "gratuitous" force when he Tasered Edmonton man Paul Cetinski after observing him jaywalking in the summer of 2004.

In addition to his duties as a police officer, Zalaski and fellow EPS officer Constable Patrick Tracy have been co-hosting "Cop Talk," a two-hour program about law enforcement issues that has aired on 630 CHED at 4 pm on Saturdays for nearly two years, and while he was not on the air on Sat, Apr 28—the day after his conviction—Zalaski was back co-hosting the program the following week, and will remain behind the microphone at least until the appeal process is exhausted, according to the station.

"First of all, it's still before the courts because there is an appeal. Until that's done, we'll make no decisions, and at that point it will be a management decision," CHED's Lesley Primeau told *Vue*. According to Primeau, despite heavy media coverage of the Taser incident, the station has received few calls from listeners about Zalaski's involvement with the program.

"Virtually none," Primeau insisted. "I'd say you could probably count them on one hand and have fingers left over."

Primeau explained that the decision to remove Zalaski from the program the week of his conviction was the officer's own.

"Aubrey pulled himself off of the air that day—and he did so because he didn't want to embarrass us," Primeau said. "We said [Zalaski continuing to host the program] was fine with us until the appeal process goes through. We do that with all of our staff regardless of the situation."

THE TASERING TOOK PLACE on Aug 9, 2004, after Zalaski witnessed Cetinski jaywalking across 103A Avenue at 97 Street near police headquarters. When Zalaski yelled "Have you ever heard of a crosswalk?" he was ignored by Cetinski, whom the officer followed and ordered to sit on the curb beside Zalaski's police cruiser. When Cetinski did not cooperate, Zalaski told Cetinski to place his hands on the car's hood so Zalaski could handcuff him. While being handcuffed, Cetinski tried to turn around to face Zalaski, at which point Zalaski Tasered Cetinski twice, causing Cetinski to defecate in his pants.

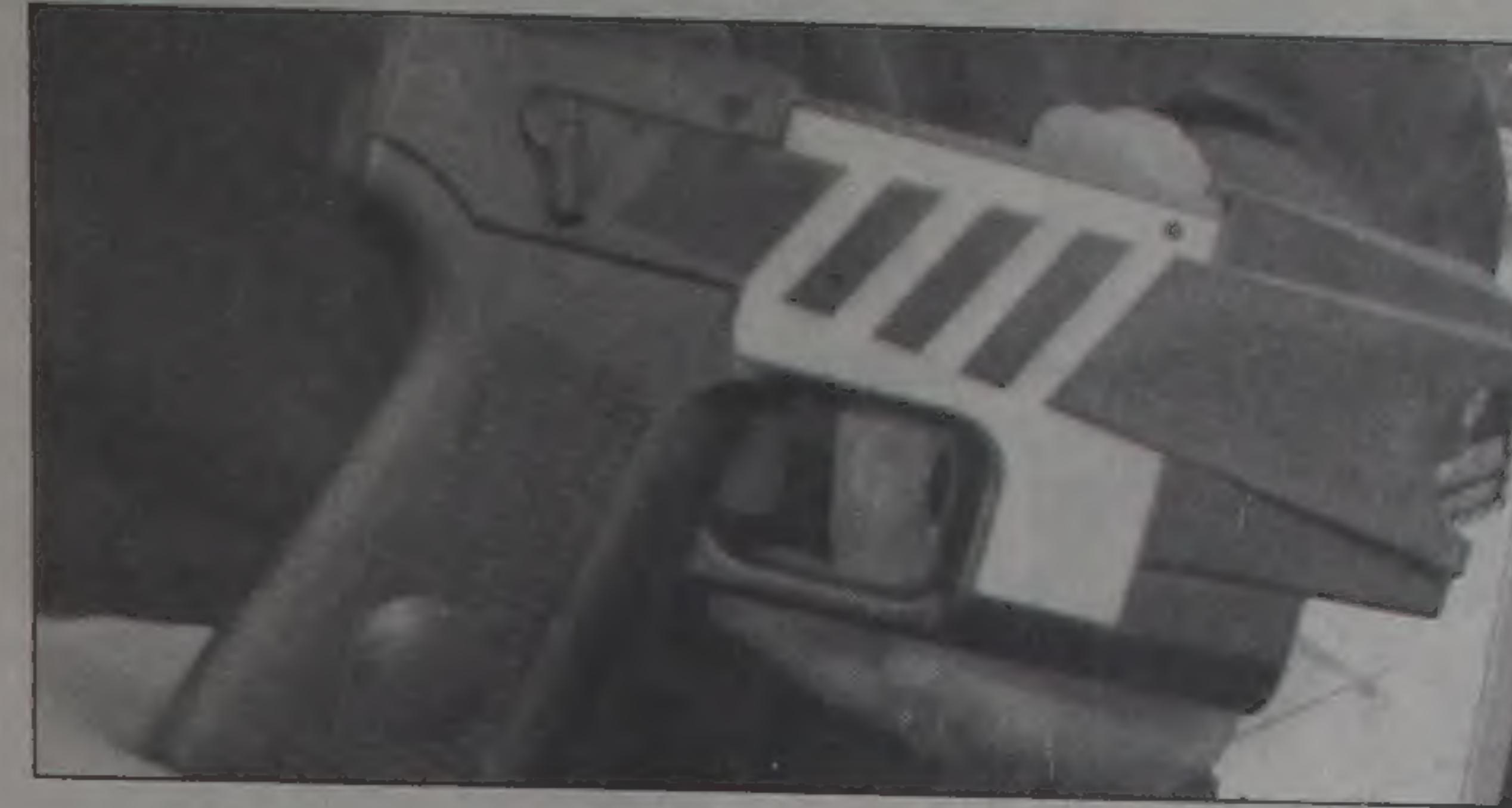
In his judgment, provincial court Judge Brian Fraser agreed that Cetinski was "less than cooperative" but was obviously not threatening or aggressive.

"Common sense tells me that a rea-

NEWS | POLICE

sonable, experienced police officer ought to be able to gain control of this situation in a less confrontational manner," the judge said. "The clear fact to me is that the accused overreacted, which resulted in an unnecessary, gratuitous use of force."

This is not the first time Zalaski's policing tactics have been questioned. In 2003, Alberta's Law Enforcement Review Board reprimanded Zalaski and two other officers over their handling of an incident involving underage drinkers at Whyte Avenue's Urban Lounge in 1998, during which Zalaski reportedly delivered a stun blow to



the head of a 17-year-old girl after she jumped on his back.

When asked about Zalaski's involvement with "Cop Talk" and

whether Zalaski is an appropriate public voice for the Edmonton Police Service, a representative of the EPS told *Vue* that Zalaski will not be par-

ticipating in the next two episodes of the program, although it is unclear whether this leave is related to the conviction.

"My understanding is that Aubrey is not even going to be on the show for at least the next two weeks," said police spokesperson Dean Parthenis. "His status is still not certain for a period further than that."

CHED's Primeau did not comment on Zalaski's conviction or the 2003 reprimand but was quick to defend Zalaski on a personal level.

"I will say that in dealing with Aubrey Zalaski that I have always been very pleased with his competence," said Primeau. "I actually think that to the most part he is a very good representative for EPS." ▀

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You can't reason with a bully

RICARDO ACUÑA / ualberta.ca/parkland

Once again, Alberta's teachers find themselves in place where the provincial government is trying to bully them into giving up their rights and accepting responsibility for something they had nothing to do with.

Here is a quick primer on the Alberta teachers' unfunded pension liability. The pension fund was established by provincial government legislation in 1936—that same legislation set contribution rates and pay-out rates for the plan.

In 1956, the Alberta government stopped contributing to the fund and began covering its ongoing obligations with funds it had previously contributed to the plan. Then, 10 years later, when these accumulated contributions had essentially run out, the government adopted a pay-as-you-go approach to the pension plan: they started paying 50 per cent of the plan's actual pay-outs, but were not actually contributing into the physical pool of money. The result was that, although the province was paying their share of pensions, they were not covering their share of the fund's operating expenses, or doing anything to make the fund inflation-proof. Teachers, on the other hand, had been paying their legally mandated contributions to the plan this entire time.

By 1992, the result was a gap of over \$6 billion between what was in the fund and what was needed. In a goodwill gesture, teachers agreed in 1992 to start making extra contributions to help eliminate the short-fall in the plan. The government did likewise, splitting the retirement fund into pre- and post-1992 funds and setting contribution levels to ensure there would be no more liabilities. But the Tory regime of the day also deemed that any new surplus in the post-1992 fund would go to pay down the pre-1992 liability.

Taking this money out of the post-1992 fund resulted in an additional shortfall in the new fund of \$742 million. This means that today the combined liability in the Alberta Teachers Retirement Fund is \$7.109 billion.

CLEARLY, THE LIABILITY IS entirely the result of poor decision-making and policy on the part of the government. Through a combination of setting the contribution rates arbitrarily, not paying into the fund for 36 years, and an ill-thought out plan to resolve the issue, government created the shortfall. And govern-

ment assumed full liability for it in the 1992 legislation.

Despite all this, however, the government recently laid out a plan to provide some relief for teachers who started teaching after 1992 and to establish a new task force to deal with the issue of the unfunded liability.

In a letter to the ATA, Education Minister Ron Liepert says that post-1992 teachers deserve relief because they "are paying for a liability they had no part in creating." The implication, of course, is that pre-1992 teachers were somehow responsible for the liability.

The letter goes on to say that the work of the taskforce to resolve the issue, and the contribution relief to new teachers, will only proceed if the ATA is willing "to take the necessary steps to ensure no strikes during the time the task force is reviewing the options." Clearly, the government's concern here is not fundamentally about the pension liability, but rather with finding a way to guarantee the passivity and compliance of teachers in a year when virtually every district in the province is entering contract negotiations.

So, in a nutshell, government causes a \$7.1 billion liability in the teachers' pension fund through mismanagement and bad decision-making, assumes responsibility for it, and then proceeds to blame the teachers and bully them into giving up their most fundamental right as workers.

My question is not so much with what the government is doing—this is pretty much par for the course for a Conservative government that has, over the years, shown complete contempt for teachers and their union. My question is why teachers across this province have not yet taken to the streets and walked off the job en masse in response to this latest act of bullying from the government. We are in the midst of an unprecedented boom with a shortage of workers and a shortage of daycare spaces—the political power and leverage of teachers does not get much better than this.

Teachers know, perhaps better than anyone, that you cannot reason with a bully. If teachers do not take action, the bullying will not stop. And if teachers allow the bullying to continue, then they will be complicit in this mess and be forced to accept whatever the bully doles out. It is a defining moment for teachers in Alberta—embrace your power, or take what you get. What would you decide? ▀

RANDOM

DISPATCH

DARREN ZENKO

dispatch@vneweekly.com

The view north through the window of somebody else's office: vast fields of real-estate stretching out toward the hazy brown band on the horizon, the worrisome dirty halo from which pour riches.

Nearer by, just across the avenue, is the construction site for what I'm told will be a Sobeys, a downtown-revitalizin' foodmart to take the pressure off the Save-On, where the post-work rush hour requires full-time traffic control and one can line-read both *People* and *Real Simple* in the time it takes to get to a checkout.

I can't see it from this angle, but I know it's there—mostly there, for now—on the plywood hoardings surrounding the site: impromptu guerrilla artshow, 16 artists, 16 pictures, flash-organized by the manic Sheri Barclay and slapped up in the wishin'-Lord-that-I-was-stoned early hours of Sunday morning. Illustrated nursery rhymes and pop-culture iconography, notional space flags and curated Elvis tapestries, the streetshow actually lasted 24 hours before the builders culled their first piece, a shocking pink celebri-collage featuring Bill Cosby. I can't see that, either, but it's been blogged ...

Behind me, muted by two or three layers of the padded grey burlap that defines our Team's habitrail, a coworker mutters emphatically into his telephone, working his real-estate deals. This is a trick lots of people are picking up, the art of keeping one's voice down while still having the go-go, for-sure-for-sure confidence required to wheel 'n' deal, a necessary survival skill for Edmontonians playing Condominium Tycoon on company time.

"We'll make the fi- ... we'll get the fi- no, yeah, no we'll get the 50 back in ... in less than two weeks, no, yeah, right, absolutely."

EVEN STREETY SLACKERS are talking real-estate these days, pierced 'n' baggy Whatever types walking down Whyte, shrugging noncommittally about flipping condos. Sixty per cent of all conversation taking place in Edmonton at any one time is about house prices, round-robin comparison of how many thousands in how many months, and through it all the one thing every Edmontonite knows for certain: if you're renting, you are *retarded*; you are *completely retarded*; it is *retarded* to pay rent.

No kidding. Questions of equity aside, the life of a renter in Edmonton is the life of a fugitive, chased from building to building by the advancing forces of condominiumization, or squeezed hard if you stay put. The notice doesn't come from

your landlord or building manager, either: one day you simply find the shit-eating grin of a realtor slipped under your door, offering you the exciting opportunity of buying your shitbox bachelor suite for a quarter-million dollars, and a week later the lobby and hallways fill with loud-mouth suits actually *rubbing their hands* as they discuss the money they'll be making while you're scrambling for yet another round of deposit/first month/hooks.

And the elevators fill with graffiti:

Thanks for making me move AGAIN

I hope you're happy

I hate you motherfuckers

GIVEN THESE FEELINGS everywhere, given a climate where even the bought-in moneymakers are getting scared shitless —"Sure, I could sell this place for three



hundred grand, but what then? I still have to fuckin' live somewhere, man."—and a new fear and loathing overtakes traditional beer and loafing, it'd be easy to read a construction-site artbombing as some kind of antidevelopment protest. But that's exactly what it's not! The name of the project—*Make It Not Suck*—says it all; it's about making this shit easier to look at. Makeup, if not a mask, for the skunked plywood Face of Progress.

Or a blessed weekend giggle, at least; these are getting fewer and farther between. Edmonton long ago lost its status as a Slacker's Paradise—this used to be the Reverse New York: if you couldn't make it here, you couldn't make it anywhere—but even as it becomes less and less possible to keep it together in BrownTown without working like a slave-dog while making mortgage deals on your bathroom breaks, we've got to honour our heritage as laughing dilettante stoner art punks ... even if we can only honour it on slow Sundays.

It's either that, or flee to Winnipeg ... v



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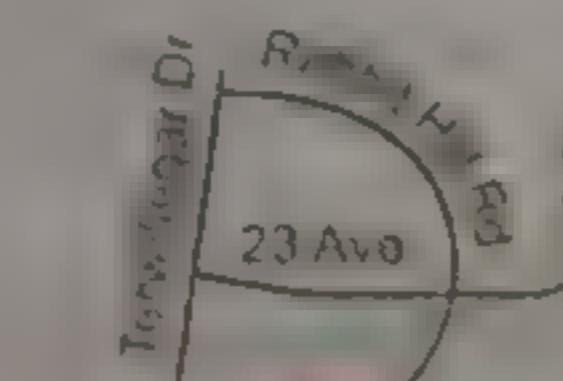
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Mild indifference over conference finals sweeps city!

HOCKEY IN THE BOX

ONE TO WATCH AND 13 PLAYERS

BY DAVE YOUNG AND TREVOR BROWN

There are four teams left in the Stanley Cup playoffs and none of them are the Oilers. None of them are the Flames either. It isn't all bad. TB and Dave make their picks for the remaining matchups.

DARK WING DUCK

DETROIT VS ANAHEIM

Two of the teams vanquished by the Oilers over last season's playoffs remain in the hunt. Detroit has managed to avoid getting bounced in the first or second round as they have in six of the last nine NHL seasons. The other three seasons they won the Cup, though. The Wings have only lost a third-round playoff series three times since the 1986-87 season. Two of those third-round losses (86-87 and 87-88) came to the Oilers. The Ducks are young and tough. The Wings have finesse and experience. Former Ducks coach Mike Babcock is behind the bench in Detroit now. What does this mean? It will be a close series and anyone could win it. If you've been reading my prior predictions, I'm not exactly Kreskin here. Oiler note: If Anaheim wins, the Oilers get the Ducks' first round draft pick next year. (DY's predictions: Wings in 6; TB's prediction: Ducks in 6)

SABRE-RATTLING:

BUFFALO VS OTTAWA I'm going to go ahead here and buck the trend. Buffalo has looked good so far, but I think that Ottawa finally has the pieces and the grit to go all the way. Emery hasn't been a brick wall, but he has been getting better. I just think that they have more weapons and a better D-corp. Unless Miller gets hot (and that could happen), I think that this is the Sens' series to lose.

(TB's prediction: Senator's in 7; DY's prediction: he's too chicken to make one ...)

DOM-INO EFFECT Three of the four remaining teams in the Stanley Cup play-

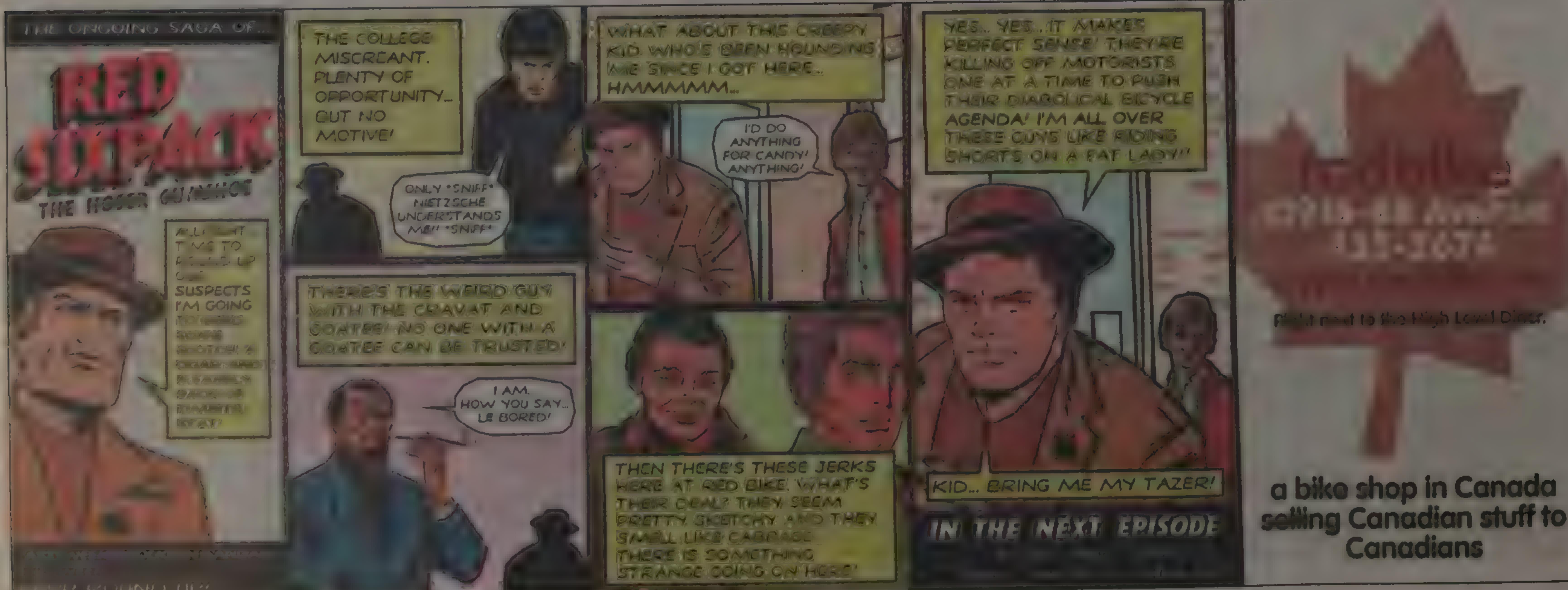
offs have had Dominik Hasek on the roster at one time. Hasek played for Buffalo and Ottawa and was a member of the Red Wings when they won the Cup in 2001, left for a spell and is back with them now and playing at the top of his game. Hasek started his career with Chicago but his mojo didn't help that team this year. DY

MAKING THEIR "O" FACE How times have changed. In days gone by, the Eastern conference was where fun hockey went to die, while huge defencemen and shut-down defences won 1-0 games by boring the other teams to death. But clutch-and-grab hockey is gone now, and teams who anticipated the change accurately have been successful while others (Philly!) have been left in the dust. The two teams in the Eastern final are currently leading the post-season in goals scored, and the series promises to be one where mistakes are severely punished. On the flipside, the Western final features two disciplined teams with veteran goalies who have averaged the least goals against in the post-season. I'll be watching the East. TB

REPEAT OFFENDERS For trivia's sake, Mike Sillinger played for Detroit, Anaheim and Ottawa through his well-travelled career. No player has been a Duck, Wing, Sabre and Senator. DY

TOOTING MY OWN HORN Yeah, Dave hasn't been all that in the playoffs, but I've managed to come out looking sorta smart. So far, I'm 7-for-8 in calling series, and I went 4-for-4 in the conference semis. So, of course, this is the first year in a long time where I'm not in a playoff pool. TB

RICH PEOPLE Edmonton billionaire (Calgary doesn't have one—we do) Daryl Katz made a reported \$145 million offer to buy the Oilers over the weekend. I looked at the Oilers online auction and looked at a jersey or stick and figured spending the \$100 or \$200 would be too extravagant and balked. Different worlds. DY



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MSG—back with a vengeance

HEALTH

WELL, WELL, WELL

CUNNIE HOWARD
health@vnewswEEKLY.com

I promised some reasons for optimism in the face of political and economic wrenches working against our health, and I have to confess it turned up sorrowfully little.

I went walking in downtown Vancouver this week, where everyone who lives close enough walks everywhere, rain or shine. I did this eagerly, thinking how healthy a life-style it would be, until I got a headache from the non-stop exhaust in my face. Because although the sidewalks are busy, so are the roads, with tourists and a million more cars en route to and from suburbia in almost-stopped traffic.

We did find lovely little food spots to eat, though, places that serve up nutritious and delicious and inexpensive meals. And, for vacationers and retirees and writers with portable offices—those who don't need to limit their walking between towers and who can get to the seawall—there is an abundance of fresh non-sour-gas-contaminated ocean air, which was very nice.

And still on my quest for reasons to be optimistic on the health front, I spotted fresh fruit stands, raw juice bars and lots of organic everything. I heard about my step-daughter's raw food vegan diet and watched her lead an outdoor boot camp exercise class. I read some encouraging consciousness-raising updates on unjust compensation for care-givers, which is a health issue for mothers.

Salary.com reported new calculations on women's unwaged labour—the 10 jobs moms typically do in their on-average 92-hour weeks should bring in close to \$140 000 a year. And while we don't in fact bring in anything for that work, and while the hours alone are a health issue, it is encouraging that some are going to the trouble to update and publish these calculations.

EAGER TO LEAVE DARK thoughts behind, hungrily tying into a box of "Sensible Solution" cholesterol free, high fibre and highly-addictive Triscuits, I managed to stop myself long enough to read the label. Not bad, I thought: olive oil (albeit heated), whole wheat—but there it was, the long-forgotten monosodium glutamate.

Those interested in keeping it in our food—and they are interested, because it is addictive—have become very clever at disguising its presence. Monopotassium glutamate, glutamic acid, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, autolyzed plant protein, textured protein, gelatin, sodium caseinate and autolyzed yeast are some of the more common cloaks it wears. And it's seemingly everywhere, including—according to John Erb, who wrote an entire book about MSG—in our beloved coffee-shop coffees.

What's so disturbing about this, besides the sneakiness, is that researchers have known for decades about the addictive and fattening properties of MSG. Yes, fattening, and not only because we can't stop at one serving. It's all there in the scientific literature. MSG is used in the lab to make animals obese for research purposes, because it effectively triples the amount of fat in the pancreas.

But Health Canada has no limits on

how much can be added to food, and claim it to be safe in any amount. Safe if you don't mind being headed for adult-onset diabetes, and safe for the bank accounts of the food industry, and safe for government who doesn't like backlash from food producers—but definitely not safe for the rest of us.

And all the while we keep pumping millions into diabetes research, when maybe all we really need to do is stop food manufacturers from using it. Stop it entirely, rather than allowing ever new ways of fooling those who do read labels.

I must continue my search for reasons to be optimistic though, because too many dark thoughts are a health risk. I got back into Alberta yesterday and am writing this minus a functioning pointer-finger this morning, as, in my haste and distress last night, rushing to cut up some veggies, I took a clean not-so-little slice off the end of my finger, nail and all. Ouch, to say nothing of using a keyboard. □

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There's no better place to B-Bim-Baab

CHRISTOPHER THRALL / dish@vneweekly.com

When I was 21, I worked in a Korean restaurant in Lake Louise. The pay was lousy, they charged outrageously for accommodations, and I've never had a better summer. I hitched into Banff or climbed mountains on my days off and learned a little Korean to make my gorgeous coworkers titter.

Over those Rocky Mountain nights, I developed a fondness for Korean dishes and reserved Asiatic ladies.

Now that I'm a happily married man, I cherish every visit to a Korean restaurant. There are only a few in the city, so I space them out. I gave **B-Bim-Baab** a little time after its reopening on the site of the venerable Korean Gardens. It boasts the best name for a restaurant, ever. Like a little poem, it trips lightly and delightfully off the tongue: B-Bim-Baab. A few of the other (less reputable) restaurant reviewers in town had fallen over themselves in praise of the place, so I thought I would try it out on a late Friday afternoon.

If you didn't know it was there, B-Bim-Baab would be tough to find. Fortunately, enough of the local lunchers supported their buffet trade. The place was empty, which suited us fine, and we took our seats next to the natural light of the windows facing a generic business park parking lot.

Its décor was spruced up, but largely reclaimed from the original restaurant. Bright red carpet clashed pleasantly with the bare pine, and blossom-based art was prominently featured. I admired the solid feel of stylish stainless steel chopsticks, which contrasted with the horrible yellow glass salt and pepper shakers, as I picked up my menu. After all, we were here for the food.

The menu was written in both Korean and English, but one of my most successful icebreaking phrases was 'Hungook mal mo tayo' (I don't speak Korean), so I focused on the English descriptions. My wife started mocking me quickly as I hunted through stir-fried dishes 'tokum' under \$16 and less expensive noodle dishes for my beloved bul go gi. Just to show her, I decided on the barbecued version—bul gal bi—instead (\$16).

She elected for the restaurant's namesake, a beef dolsoot b-bim-baab (\$11.99), strips of marinated beef, rice and bean sprouts topped with a fried egg for an extra \$0.99. Despite the fact that each would come with my much anticipated kim chee and bean sprout salad, my wife added an order of goon mandu wontons (\$4.99) to start.



KOREAN | MON - SAT TO 10 PM, CLOSED SUNDAYS
B-BIM-BAAB
 9543 - 42 AVENUE
 433.1239

WE SETTLED BACK and waited as our pot of barley tea (\$1.98) steeped. The warm, grainy flavour was deeper and more comforting than the lighter, transitory tang of green or jasmine tea. I prefer barley with anything but the spiciest dishes. I avoided the libations on the menu, despite being tempted by Korean beers, whiskeys and sake.

I finally poured us each a tiny cupful from the tiny pot as our lovely, smiling server approached. Somewhat hesitantly she said, "I have some bean sprouts and kim chee, if you're familiar with it?"

My eyes were already glued to the small dishes of my favourite side dishes of any cuisine. "Kahn sa ham nida," I thanked her in my hideously deformed Korean and she laughed as she placed them in front of us. My wife scooped up some of the sprouts and crunched happily, exclaiming in delight over the barley tones she found added to the side dish. A slightly salty aftertaste chased them down nicely.

I was all about the kim chee, though. Its heat was milder than I was used to, doubtlessly made tamer in deference to our Caucasian palates. As a result, the flavours of the chill cabbage and usually fiery red sauce were much more approachable.

I was still spearing kim chee when my wife's order arrived, along with our starter. The b-bim-baab easily stole centre stage. It was a feast for the ears, eyes and nose in a sizzling black stone bowl on a wooden tray to protect the table. Our server asked if we knew how to mix it, but I gestured her to go ahead.

She added some hot sauce and tossed the multicoloured array of ingredients like a salad. Strips of beef and shredded egg blended with the rice, sprouts and carrot into a savoury mess. The aroma of cooking vegetables and warm beef enveloped our table.

I served myself a bit of b-bim-baab and savoured the rich blend. The texture was that of a rice casserole from a skilled baba, but the flavours were all Asian. I could see why they named the restaurant after it. Believe it or not, my next sample was even better. The rice had crisped against the sides of the stone bowl and the crunchy grains added another dimension to the already hearty experience.

I supplemented the b-bim-baab paradise with one of the wontons, then stopped thieving my wife's dish in order to hoover down the light-tasting appetizers. Where normally spring rolls come wrapped in oily shells that explode into jagged shrapnel inside your defenseless mouth, these held their luscious, delicately-seasoned interiors in a single crisp wrap. The crust extended into crunchy edges that were perfect for dipping in the homemade sweet and sour sauce.

THE REVIEWER'S CODE states that anything worth indulging is worth overindulging. I didn't save much room for my own dish by the time I rinsed my palate with lukewarm barley tea and looked up to see our server approach with yet another sizzling platter.

I squared my shoulders, exchanged a grim glance with my bride, scooped some fluffy white rice from a scalding aluminum bowl and snagged a strip of beef off its cast iron platter. The bul gal bi short ribs were cross-cut to leave in the bones, and the meat was frankly succulent. As frustrating as it is to admit, this reviewer doesn't have words to describe the result of tender beef, marinated then barbecued in stunning spices. The best summer patio memory faded into irrelevance in the face of this Korean delight.

The delicate knifework was slowing me down, so I relied on my fingers and teeth to peel meat from the bones. My wife finished our second bowl of bean sprouts as I stuffed myself stupid on the last strip of bul gal bi.

In no mood to even enquire about their dessert offerings, I settled our criminally underpriced \$35 bill (before tax and tip) and loaded up to leave. There are quite a few culinary ethnicities in the city, but nothing passes for comfort food for me like a little "memories of Lake Louise" Korean cuisine. "Kahn sa ham nida," indeed—B-Bim-Baab, I'll see you again soon. ▀

FOOD NEWS! | **DISH WEEKLY**

A FORKFUL OF GOLDEN GOODNESS As soon as I saw the Blue Plate Diner at the top of the list for best appetizers, I knew that our readers—the staffers in downtown hi-rises, the daily bus commuters and the artistically-inclined bohemians of Edmonton—came out to vote for the Golden Forks.

The list read like the Dish section's hot spots for the past year: Fresh Start Bakery, Funky Pickle and Organic Roots came out to dominate their categories while the huge chains with massive marketing budgets and moderate food quality were left in the dust. Congratulations, *Vue* readers—your tastes were reflected in this year's results.

One of the biggest surprises was a David-and-Goliath story, where plucky El Rancho took out five-time winner Julio's Barrio for Best Latin American Restaurant. I'm a dedicated convert to El Rancho's huevos rancheros and glasses of freshly squeezed pineapple juice, so I was delighted with the kudos they earned.

Another delight was the Best New Restaurant nod for Skinny Legs and Cowgirls, who could not have served enough people to earn the title but probably thrilled enough with their Tom Robbins-esque name alone.

I even learned a few things. Tiny Shine holds their Canada Place customers' hearts for the best under-\$10 meal and the University-area Sugarbowl is the best spot for people-watching. I'll have to pick up a sandwich and head down to watch the world go by.

In short, thank you, *Vue* readers. After the soul-shattering results of a couple years' worth of corporate Golden Forks, you really came through. A contemporary mix of hot independent spots and unexpected chains has built a list of "must-see" places for the dining Edmontonian. Just think: you'll never again have to ask, "Where do you want to go tonight?" You have the list in your hands, and the tremendous array of cuisines and culinary experiences are yours for the sampling.

Bon appetit!

• *Dish Weekly* spills the beans on culinary happenings around town. Got an event, an announcement or some unsubstantiated gossip? Email dish@vneweekly.com or fax 426.2889.

And now, the winners ...

It is that time of year again. Hundreds of our readers filled out ballots telling us who they felt were the best restaurants in town. There were categories with run away winners and categories with dozens of different favourites. One thing we have done differently this year was give an award to the independent restaurant with the most votes and the chain with the most. When we planned this, it was to ensure that smaller businesses got a chance to win despite some chains massive marketing budgets. But, this year, the indies were the victors. Some categories had no votes at all for chains; in others so few, we decided to let the indie stand on its own. Are we being selective? A little but it favours the restaurants owned by your neighbours and always the one with the most votes. So, here are people's choices!

Best Dishes

BEST APPETIZERS

BLUE PLATE DINER
10145 104 Avenue, 429 0740

BEST APPETIZERS (CHAIN)

JOEY TOMATOES

BEST SOUP (TIE)

SOUL SOUP
1020 101A Avenue, 409 8272

FRESH START BAKERY
484 Riverbend Square, 433 9623

BEST SOUP (CHAIN)

TIM HORTONS

BEST SALAD

ORGANIC ROOTS
8225 112 Street, 413 1730

BEST SALAD (CHAIN)

OLIVE GARDEN

BEST BREAD

FRESH START BAKERY
484 Riverbend Square, 433 9623

BEST BREAD (CHAIN)

COB'S

BEST STEAKS

VON'S STEAK & FISH HOUSE
10309 81 Avenue, 439 0041

BEST STEAKS (CHAIN)

THE KEG

BEST VENISON

NORMAND'S
11639A Jasper Avenue, 482 2600

BEST TAPAS

LA TAPA
10523 99 Avenue, 424 8272

BEST PUB FOOD

SHERLOCK HOLMES
Multiple Locations, 423 0202

BEST PUB FOOD (CHAIN) (TIE)

BREWSTERS & BOSTON PIZZA

BEST DIM SUM (TIE)

NOODLE NOODLE
10008 106 Street, 422 6862

GOLDEN RICE BOWL

5365 Gateway Blvd, 435 3388

BEST SANDWICHES

COL MUSTARD'S
10802 124 Street, 448 1590

BEST SANDWICHES (CHAIN) (TIE)

QUIZNOS & SUBWAY

BEST SUSHI (CHAIN)

KYOTO
Multiple locations, 420 1750

BEST SUSHI (CHAIN)

TOKYO EXPRESS

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



TUESDAY NIGHTS
CELTIC JAM
JAM SESSION AT 9:30PM PLUS IRISH DANCERS AT 11PM

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Best Dishes

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

BEST HAMBURGERS

THE GARAGE BURGER BAR
10242 106 Street, 423 5014

BEST HAMBURGERS (CHAIN)

HARVEYS

BEST FRIES

DADEU
10548A 82 Avenue, 433 0930

BEST FRIES (CHAIN)

MCDONALDS

BEST PIZZA (TE)

FUNKY PICKLE
Multiple Locations, 433 3865

&
ROSE BOWL
10111 117 Street, 482 5152

BEST DESSERTS (TE)

BEST PIZZA (CHAIN)

PIZZA 73
Multiple Locations

BEST DESSERTS (TE)

BLOCK 1912
10361 82 Avenue, 433 6575

&

FRESH START BAKERY
484 Riverbend Square, 433 9623

BEST DESSERTS (CHAIN)

EARLS

BEST CHICKEN WINGS

FILTHY McNASTY'S
10511A 82 Avenue, 432 5224

BEST CHICKEN WINGS (CHAIN)

PIZZA 73

BEST SWEETS

FRESH START BAKERY
484 Riverbend Square, 433 9623

BEST SWEETS (CHAIN)

PURDY'S

BEST SNACKS

FRESH START BAKERY
484 Riverbend Square, 433 9623

BEST SNACKS (CHAIN)

GREAT CANADIAN BAGEL

BEST WRAPS

BAD ASS JACKS
Multiple Locations, 468 3452

CONTINUES ON PAGE 19



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If I had a million dollars, I'd open Blues Java Bar

ELLA JAMESON / ella@vneweekly.com

I heard a surprising bit of unsubstantiated trivia this week: a lot of lottery winners open restaurants or pubs with their winnings.

Often destined to fail, these eateries represent the optimistic, yet misguided, belief that all it takes to run a restaurant is a big heart and a fat wallet. The newly-minted millionaire thinks he'll try his hand at running a pub, and his first executive decision is to name a sandwich after himself.

Owning your own business can be incredibly rewarding, but any restaurateur will concede that failure rates are high and the investment in both time and money is endless. Banks joke that if you want to make a million dollars, start with two million and open a restaurant.

I found myself pondering this topic while sipping a chai latte (\$2.95) at the **Blues Java Bar** on 50 Street in Goldbar. Blues Java just reopened after remaining closed for much of April. As a regular patron, I was curious about why it was closed, so I dropped by for a tender roast beef half sandwich and small bowl of fresh vegetable soup (\$5.50 for both). I hoped for a bit of gossip on the side.

Leah Mailloux didn't take long to dish the story: it turns out she was on vacation. Just back from a sojourn to her native Kenya, she oozed positive energy as she prepared my frothy chai

DINER

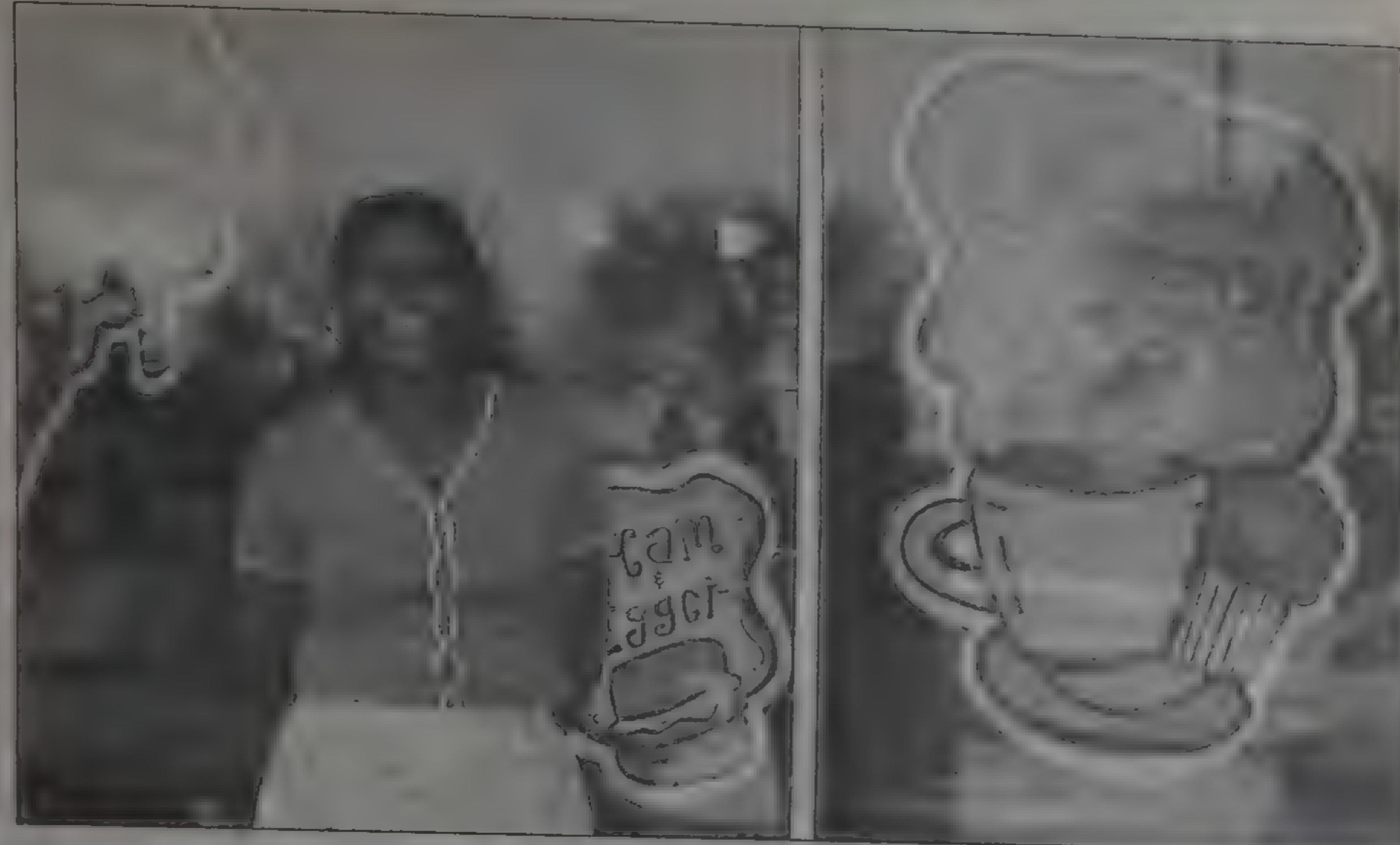
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BLUES JAVA BAR
5010 - 106 AVENUE

latte. She showed me a photo of her daughter and grandson back in Kenya; a pair of smiling faces beamed back at me from the glossy paper.

Mailloux does it all at Blues Java: she makes the daily soup and sandwiches, whips up the freshly-brewed cappuccinos, and greets her patrons by name as they slide into their favourite leather seats or gather around their usual tables.

The blue and wine-coloured walls, massive bookcase stacked with paperbacks and soft light streaming in from the windows lent the café a warm, homey feel. The room was divided in two; one side was quiet and den-like, while the other hosted slightly more bustle. The café seated just enough people to maintain an informal feel. As soon as the weather permits, a few bistro tables will make their way out front and into the sunshine.

WHILE I BLEW gently on my latte, ladies from the Hardisty Pool morning aqua-cize class chatted about the events of the day. This thrice-weekly ritual has them squeeze up to 12 women around two small tables on one side of the café.



A gentleman struck up a conversation about his apple tree and generously offered me a few kilograms at the end of the summer. He drove from the far north end of the city to enjoy Leah's coffee and good chi. When she had the chance, Leah sat down to chat, revealing tidbits about her trip and the changes she noticed since her last visit to Kenya.

I listened to the soft voices and

laughter while sipping at my warm vegetable soup laced with cauliflower, green beans, slices of carrot and bits of corn. The creamy tomato broth was rich with bold flavour. I relaxed, enjoying the aroma of the café as I nibbled on my roast beef sandwich, which was served on thick bread and generously spread with mayonnaise and mustard, then topped with grated cheddar cheese.

Some people are at home in the kitchen of a small café, a bustling pub or a posh eatery. I don't know if running a small café is Leah's dream, but she certainly makes it look like fun. Maybe that's why so many others think they can do it.

Maybe we're all just one lottery ticket away from a sandwich named after ourselves. Hmm ... who wouldn't come by to try the B-Ella-T? v

VICTORY IS SWEET

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Distill the essence of beer—at home

JASON FOSTER / greathead@vnewsworld.com

It wasn't long ago that when someone offered a bottle of homemade beer, the recipient would stumble for polite words of rejection, or scramble for the door.

While the old images of a pungent, barely drinkable concoction may not have been entirely fair, these days it couldn't be further from the truth. Today, anyone can create a beer in their kitchen that will rival their favourite pub draught.

I admit that I have been a homebrewer for the last 15 years. My basement brewery has turned out hundreds of cases of beer; some were better than others, but all had a unique flavour unmatched by commercial brands. Many have even won medals. I am nothing special: homebrewing has become a hobby that is accessible to anyone who has a love of beer and a willingness to break the habit of drinking store-bought beer.

Why would someone want to make their own beer? Two reasons: cost and quality. I started homebrewing in university, when poverty forced me to make a choice: reduce my beer consumption or find a cheaper way to get it.

An average batch of homebrew costs six dollars per case—50 cents a beer. No discount beer even comes close to that price point. Not only did I want cheap beer, I didn't want to sacrifice quality. Making delicious, original beer in your own home is not difficult.

Are you having trouble finding your favourite type of beer? Just make it. Although liquor stores in Alberta have a limited selection of beer styles, you can make any style of beer in your kitchen. Not only can you brew other beers, you can create your own: I have friends who brew beer with pine needles, pumpkins and even Grape Nuts cereal.

ACCORDING TO KEVIN ZAYCHUK, the best part of homebrewing can be summed up in two words: the beer.

"It has opened up the world of beer to me," he says. "Most people do not realize there are over 20 styles of beer and many distinct sub-styles. It is much more complex than wine will ever be."

Zaychuk would know: he is president of the Edmonton Homebrewers' Guild (EHG), which is one of Canada's

DISH HOME BREWING

largest and most vibrant homebrew clubs.

"The EHG is currently a 54-member club with one focus—beer," says Kevin. "We have a diverse group of members with at least one thing in common."

The club's popularity is at a record high and Zaychuk thinks that this is because Edmontonians are looking for something more than the fizzy yellow liquid produced by every large brewery. EHG's annual Aurora Brewing Challenge is Canada's second-largest homebrew competition. Held

do at this point is make sure that the fermenter maintains a stable temperature and that the yeast has enough oxygen.

The final step is bottling, where you transfer the beer to bottles, add a little extra sugar to spark a final fermentation that carbonates the beer in the bottle, and cap it.

There is plenty of help available from local homebrew experts. Andrew Stephenson, owner of the Southside Winning Wines Plus, spends much of his day offering helpful tips and troubleshooting. He also offers all the equipment that is necessary to start homebrewing, from starter kits at \$39.99 to the more advanced for up to \$150.

Advanced brewers build beer from malted barley grain and hops. Since this involved process requires mashing and sparging (filtering), most homebrewers stick with kits. For price, simplicity and quality, Stephenson recommends Brewhouse kits because "they are so bloody easy, much easier than wine."

Stephenson adds that, in recent years, the quality of homebrew has increased dramatically.

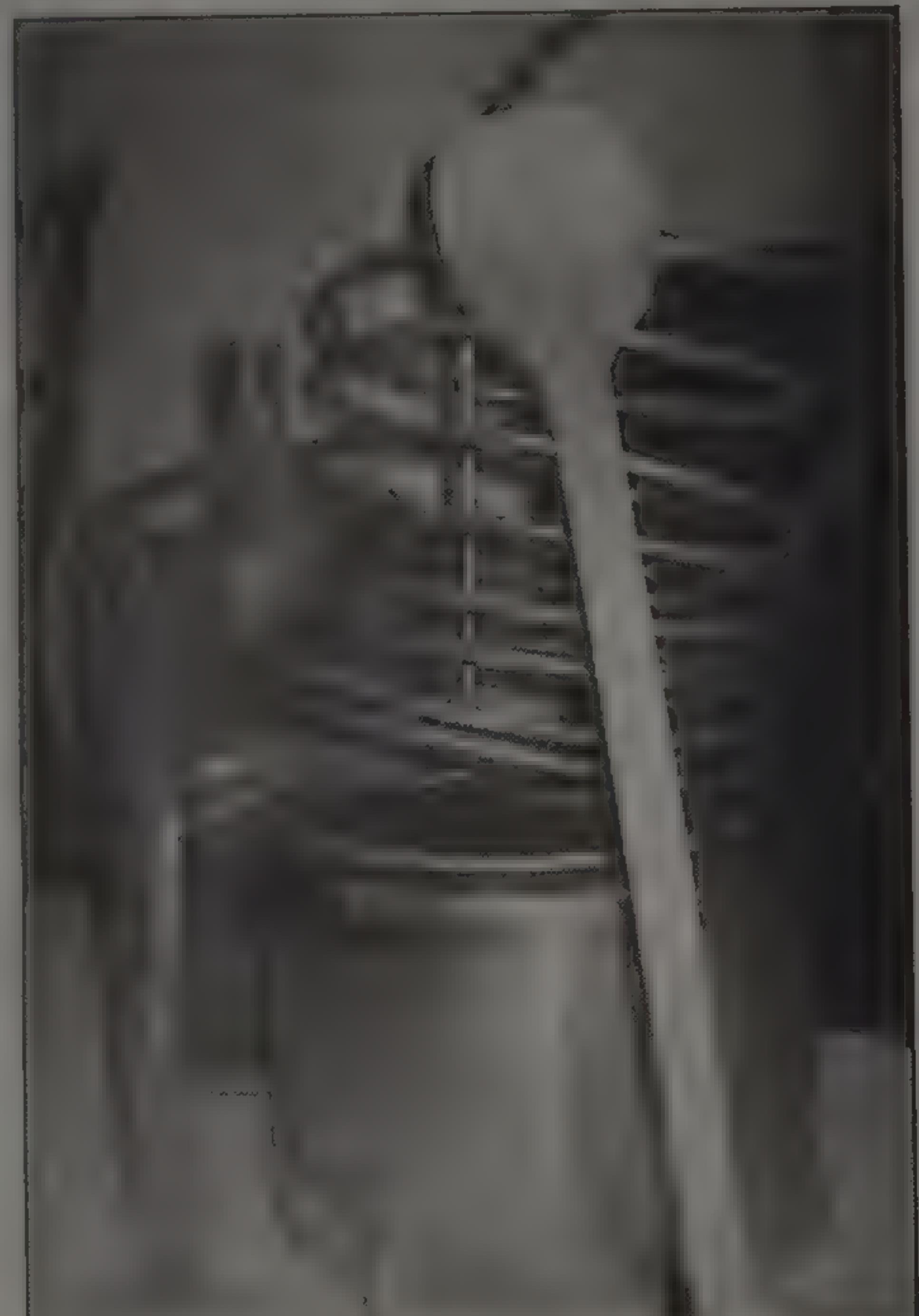
"Homebrew used to be something slightly sordid," he explains. "But since the increase in quality ingredients, brewers take pride in their creations, because the product is so much better."

If you still doubt the quality of homemade beer, consider this: winemaking kits use grapes that have been rejected by commercial wineries. Homemade beer, however, uses the very same malt and hops used by the best professional breweries. This allows the homebrewer to make beer as delicious as anything available commercially.

If you get into homebrewing, there is a community to support you in your new hobby. The EHG meets monthly at the Alley Kat brewery.

"It is a great evening with a lot of friendly people and an opportunity to learn about a different beer styles," Zaychuk notes. "We discuss the latest in brewing techniques, homebrew competitions and commercial examples."

It comes as no surprise that a fair amount of high-quality beer is also consumed, where BYOB is a matter of pride. ▀

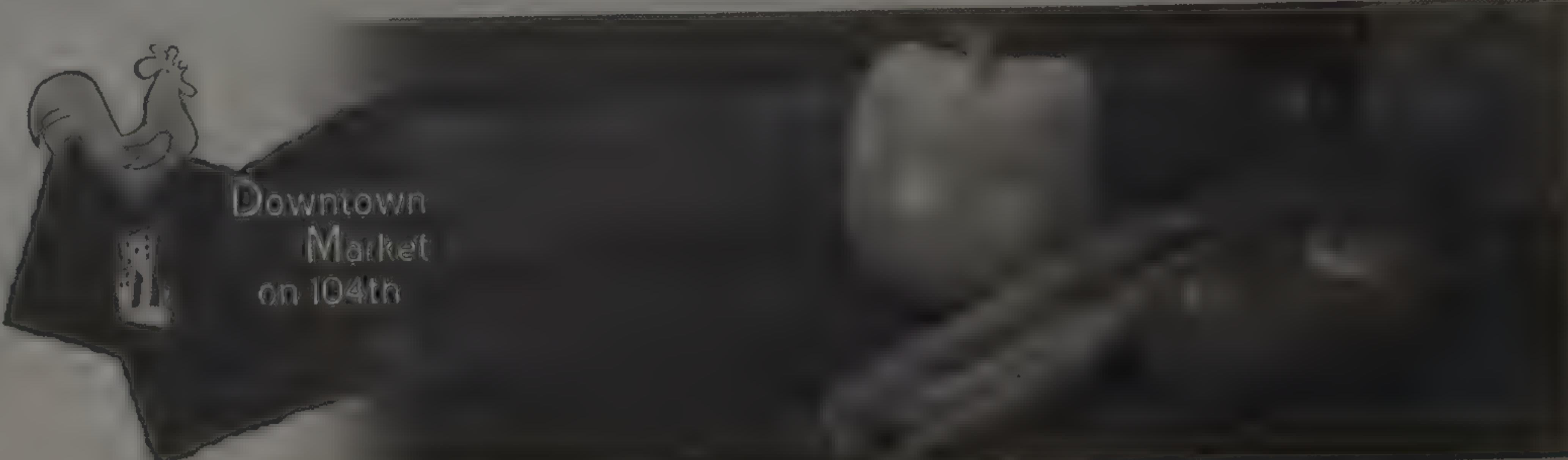


the second week of June, it regularly draws more than 300 entries from across the continent.

But what if you just want to give it a try to make some decent beer and save a few bucks?

THE PROCESS IS SIMPLE. In the first stage, you prepare the wort, which is the sweet barley-malt liquid infused with hops. In prepared kits, this entails nothing more than adding water (plus sugar in cheaper kits) and stirring.

In the second stage, you let the yeast ferment the beer. The yeast digests the sugar to produce alcohol and carbon dioxide. All you need to



Best Restaurants

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BEST FINE DINING (CHAIN)

RUTH'S CHRIS

BEST MID-PRICE DINING

BLUE PLATE DINER

10145 104 Avenue, 429 0740

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PIZZA 73

You can get some island time at Ms V's

Curiosity drove me into Ms V's one cold spring night. Tucked between a Money Mart and a 7-11 in a sketchy area of town, the diner didn't exactly scream location.

However, I wasn't going to pass up the opportunity for some stick-to-your-ribs home cooking. (Especially because home cooking wasn't happening at our home: I simply was sick of dragging out the CorningWare to make another casserole.)

We felt right at home, since the dining area was no bigger than the eating area in our townhouse. Six small tables dotted the bare area. A beaded doorway separated the kitchen from the tables, and a sweet toddler was having a grand time running back and forth.

My own preschooler did not need a formal invitation to join the fun, and I began to relax when I realized that no one minded their game. Besides, the blaring reggae music drowned out any noise they could have made.

My husband approached the counter to order. Though a whiteboard sign behind the cash register displayed many options, he announced to me that there were only three available tonight: jerk chicken (\$9), curry chicken (\$9) and beef stew (\$8.50). I quickly snatched up the jerk chicken and my husband decided on the beef stew.

He managed to look self-satisfied when he informed me that our drink orders were a surprise. There appeared

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to be more beverage choices than food ones, for he took his time peering into the glass cooler. Triumphant, he came back with an Irish moss beverage (\$3.50) for me to sample, a peanut punch energy drink (\$3.50) for our little peanut, while he settled on the less exotic Busta banana soda (\$2).

MY MOSS BEVERAGE had a milkshake's consistency and was surprisingly sweet and flavourful. Although chocolaty in color, it had a spicy ginger taste. Irish moss is actually a species of red alga, and is famous for its aphrodisiac qualities.

The drink is notorious for men in Jamaica and is advertised to "put lead in your pencil." Although I can't say it did anything for me, I would keep it in mind on our next date night. Our daughter slurped back her peanut butter smoothie. The Busta banana soda, although resembling cream soda, reminded me too much of the banana fluoride I loathed at the dentist office.

I did not have much time to mull over the fluoride memory, for our main dishes appeared quickly at our table. Each entrée came with a generous side of red beans and rice, as well



as a portion of coleslaw.

My jerk chicken was a flavourful combination of dark spices. A large thigh and leg were doused in a marinade filled with chilies, garlic and cayenne pepper. The chicken was amazingly tender and flaked away easily with the stroke of a fork. My only complaint was a slight oversalting that took away from the meat's other seasonings. I was glad to have the mild rice and beans to soak up some of the salt.

My husband's beef stew, on the other hand, was the perfect combination of spices. Unfamiliar with Caribbean cuisine, I could not define

the exact flavours in the stew, except to say that it was tangy without being spicy. I was forced to draw this conclusion from the small piece I was allowed to sample, however, as my husband protected his territory. He was pleased to see no vegetables hiding in the sauce that would distract him from the thick pieces of tender meat. He noted that the rice was steaming hot but the meat was only lukewarm. It was a slight disappointment to an otherwise delicious meal.

As we were finishing our plates, I realized that, despite the large amount of people ordering, we were the only ones who chose to eat in the

restaurant. Most of the regulars took their meals to go. This would be the perfect pit stop on the way to an impromptu picnic.

Next time I will consider the park, since my daughter seemed to have a burst of enthusiasm. (This may have been caused by consuming a full energy drink.) As my husband went to pay the \$33 bill including tax and tip, I allowed my daughter to dance to one more reggae song before we hit the road.

We decided that, despite the cold, we would hit the park for some swing time. After all, I didn't have any dishes to do—Ms V's took care of that. □



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There's always room to grappa dessert at Nello's

TANIS MCLEOD / tanis@vneweekly.com

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NELLO'S RESTAURANT
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If you're in a hurry, this place is not for you states a small sign on the door to Nello's Restaurant. Was it fair warning that great food takes time, or the owner's perspective on life?

Standing at the door, my friend and I raised our eyebrows, shrugged and agreed that since we weren't in a hurry, this could be our kind of place.

Inside, muted lighting cast a warm glow over the linen-draped tables. We made our way to the back of the room and settled on stools at the bar.

While my friend got down to the business of ordering drinks, I took in paintings in the rich, summery tones of patios and shorelines, hung against walls of sunflower yellow. A photo of a baby perched on the hostess desk and family mementos were featured around the room.

My friend read the wine menu and discussed our options with the bartender. While the house wines were mostly Italian and Chilean house wines, the reserve list included Veuve Clicquot and Moet & Chandon Dom Perignon.

She surprised me by choosing Martini & Rossi Asti sparkling wine (\$15). "It helps me get silly," she explained. There was a good possibility we'd get silly that night, so it was a good choice. As I sipped the sweet, ticklish bubbly, I did feel a bit silly.

We drank more sparkling wine and read the specials before moving to our table. As we settled into our seats,

I noticed one family celebrating a birthday and a young couple holding hands. I felt self-conscious about getting rowdy here, but my friend assured me that our girls' night out was special, too. "This is our 'me' time," she chided me, "so relax."

We received our menus and lingered over the descriptions of each dish. Salsiccia (sausage) flambéed in cognac caught my eye, served with kidney beans, chick pea salad and roasted potatoes. "Vitello à la Nello" had a poetic ring. There were seven salads listed and each sounded especially exotic, especially the broccoli salad with garlic, olive oil and black pepper; the Bocconcini salad; and Nello's signature salad of saporito chicken with lettuce, tomato and red onion in a creamy garlic sauce.

The menu also proclaimed Nello's as St Albert's finest fresh pasta and espresso bar. Glancing at the list of arrabiatta, aglio and angel hair pastas, I had no doubt that they had earned the distinction.

WE SETTLED ON mussels in white wine with tomato sauce (\$15.95) to start, and I requested osso buco with saporito chicken (\$29.95) while my friend ordered the roasted quail



(\$24.95).

When it arrived, the feast was exceptional; there were enough fresh mussels to serve four! A spicy, jambalaya-like sauce of onions, jalapeno peppers, diced tomatoes, cilantro and wine accompanied the mussels. We used our hands to pry open the shells and sopped up the remaining sauce with slices of crusty bread.

By the time we were finished, my tongue was burning, tomato wine sauce was splattered everywhere, and

we were giggling like schoolgirls. I guiped more of the sparkling wine to cool my tongue and strategically positioned my napkin over spots on the tablecloth. As she presented the entrées, our server assured us that everyone makes a mess

We agreed to share our entrées, and I traded pieces of veal shank for sections of quail. The veal's tomato and parmesan seasoning offered a light, vinegary taste that contrasted the heavier, gamey taste of quail

Because I struggled to separate the meat from the quail's tiny bones, I scooped up the accompanying sautéed mushrooms and onions and left most of the quail on my plate

My accompanying Misa salad was fresh and light with its tomatoes, celery and red onions mixed with parmesan and romaine. The saporito chicken however, was the star of the night. Cool chunks of chicken coated in creamy garlic sauce delivered an explosion of texture and taste. Even though we felt very nearly full before the entrees arrived, we still ate every bite

We felt totally gorged but couldn't resist reading the dessert descriptions. Tartufo (hazelnut ice cream rolled in cocoa) and the Italian Kiss (chocolate ice cream rolled in ground hazelnuts and chocolate chips) tempted us, but we declared ourselves temporarily too full for dessert.

To convince us we had room for more, our server called in Raoul, who offered us a new treat. "It's not ever on the menu yet," he told us with a wink, and produced two snifters of chocolate-flavoured grappa. Like drinking fresh, ice-cold chocolate milk, the treat was delicious. With his hand gently placed on my shoulder, Raoul stayed to chat and watch over us, making sure we took the time to enjoy our drinks before settling the bill—\$91.05 before tax and tip.

We left over two hours later, making promises to return soon for dessert and peach-flavoured grappa. □

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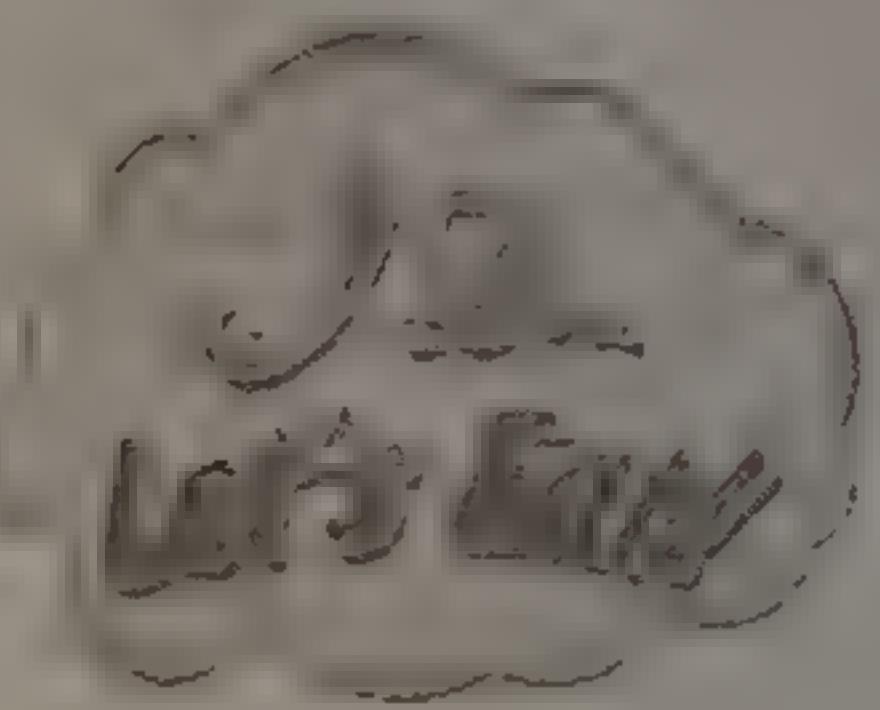
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Look for a paler shade of white beer

GREAT HEAD
JASPER FORTIN
greathead@vneweekly.com

RICKARD'S WHITE
MOLSON COORS, MONTREAL
\$5.25 FOR A PINT

Everyone has seen the series of Rickard's Red ads—majestic choruses offer dramatic prologues to a carefully poured pint. A finely crafted beer demands a most deserving customer.

Pure hogwash, of course.

In reality, Rickard's Red is an insipid red lager with no more flavour than Molson Canadian. Rickard's label attempts to fool the casual beer purchaser into believing that they are drinking a hand-crafted microbrew rather than a corporate concoction. Normally, this beer isn't worthy of mention in Great Head.

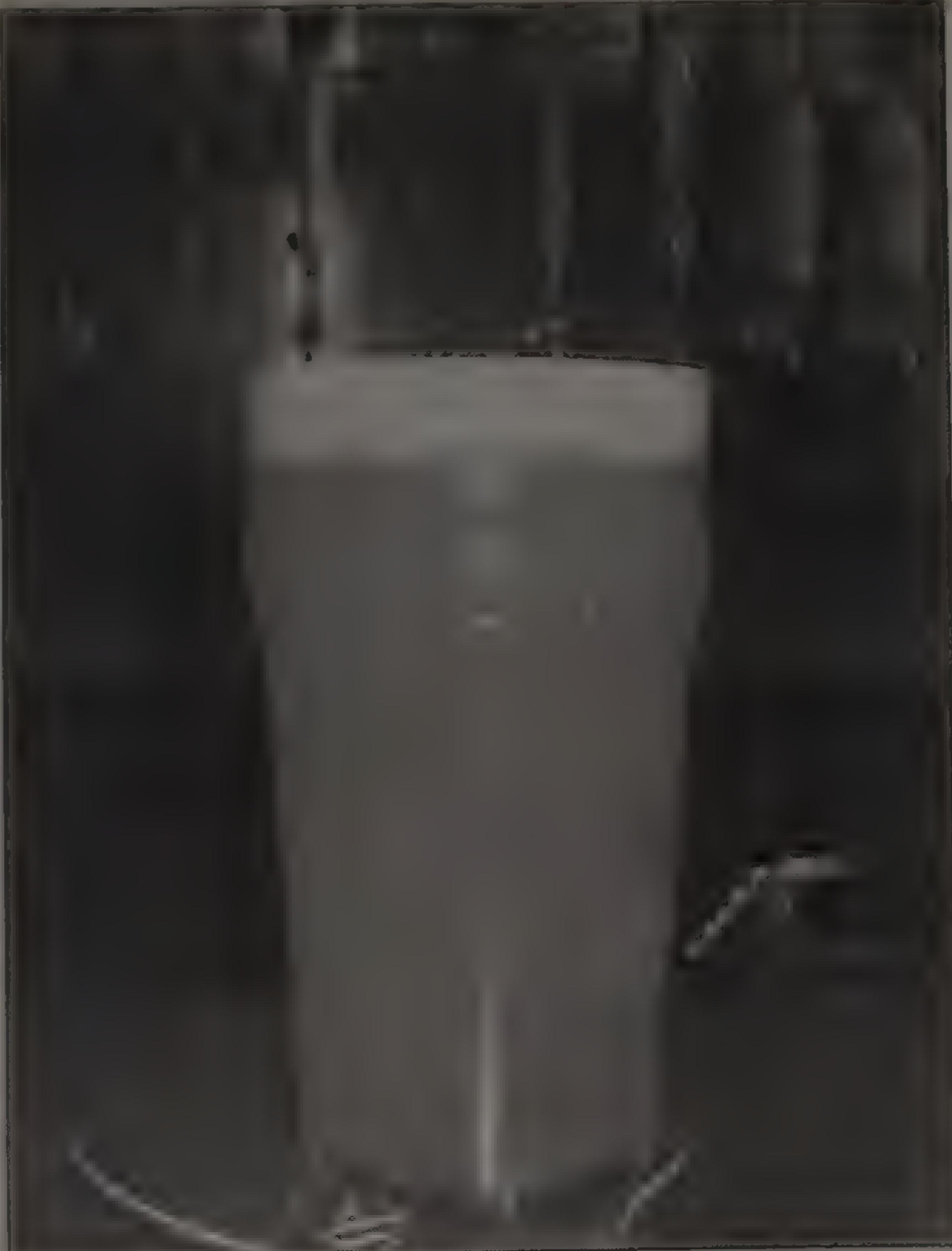
But Rickard's has offered a twist: a summer beer called Rickard's White is now available at select pubs. The barkeeps describe it as a light, fruity beer akin to Hoegaarden, the leading example of the Belgian witbier or "white beer" style.

Witbier is hazy, light and fruity with a hint of delicate spice. A citrus and coriander freshness lighten the palate. While the beer behind it provides a gentle, grainy sweetness, witbier is supposed to be a subtle beer that offers a tart-sweet combination to quench summertime thirst.

This would definitely be a new direction for Molson. Who am I to turn down a beer I've never sampled? I promptly ordered a pint.

The first thing I notice as the bartender slides the glass toward me is the beer's cloudy appearance. Rickard's White is not so much white as a pale orange-gold. The bartender explains that this beer is served with a slice of orange. I quickly decline: no beer should need a fruit chaser.

The beer has a dense white head with some rich mounds that dissipate



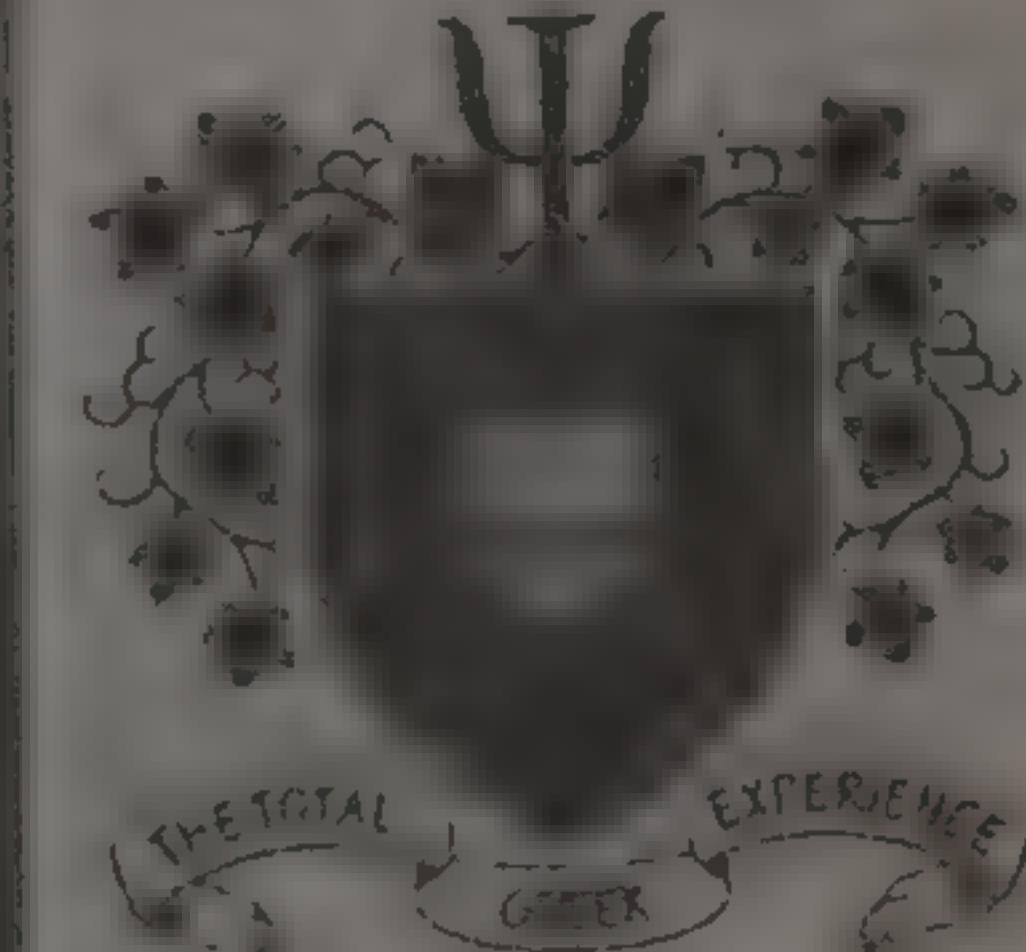
quickly. Orange and other citrus scents dominate the aroma, while a clean, sweet freshness lingers behind. I detect no hops at all.

Orange is also the predominant flavour up front. The fruity citrus flavour moves to the middle of the swallow, then mixes with a slight spiciness. The beer offers little malt presence and is rather thin under the citrus. While giving a creamy mouthfeel, the beer delivers a lingering sharpness that is a little sour at the end.

Rickard's White is somewhat refresh-

ing, but the flavour is flaccid and one-dimensional. This beer is completely missing the coriander freshness and slight peppery spice. Furthermore, the brewers have overshot the orange character—it takes over the beer rather than enhancing it. That lingering sour sharpness is also unsettling.

This beer is a pale imitation of Hoegaarden. Consider this a public service announcement: Rickard's White is a fraud. If you want to sample a white beer, order a Hoegaarden instead. ▀

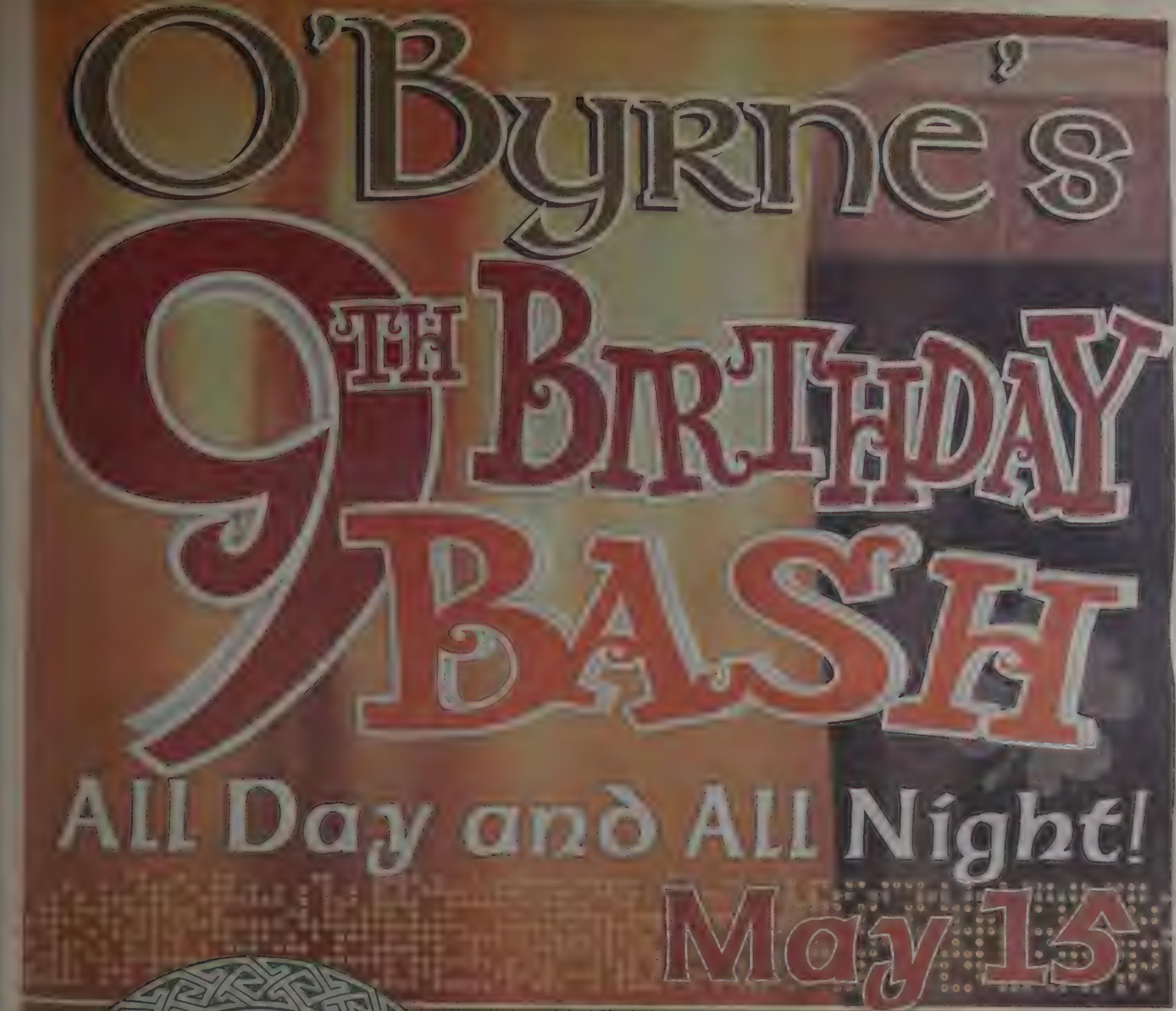


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SWEETENED / DISINFECTANT

It's fun to tell people about the billions of bacteria living it up in their yogurt cup. Without bacteria, the world as we know it would grind to a halt (nothing could biodegrade, for example), but it's still a bit unnerving to think about countless microorganisms somersaulting in our innards.

The mania for disinfecting everything makes it hard for some to accept the microscopic critters in our guts, where they do some of their best work. But there's no ignoring these beneficial bugs, and everyone from farm stands to strip mall retailers are advertising how many types of bacteria their yogurts contain for good reason. Recent scientific studies have shown that the bacteria in yogurt is key to its value as a health food.

Of course, bacteria isn't the only thing that makes yogurt a great snack or breakfast choice. Yogurt made from cow's milk is packed with calcium, protein and vitamin D. People who are allergic to milk products, or very lactose intolerant, can try a non-milk soy-based yogurt. Most, but not all of the lactose (natural milk sugar) in yogurt is digested by beneficial bacteria, so the majority of lactose-intolerant people can eat yogurt unless they are very sensitive. For a more exotic flavour or animal alternative to cow's milk, there are also goat's milk and sheep's milk yogurts.

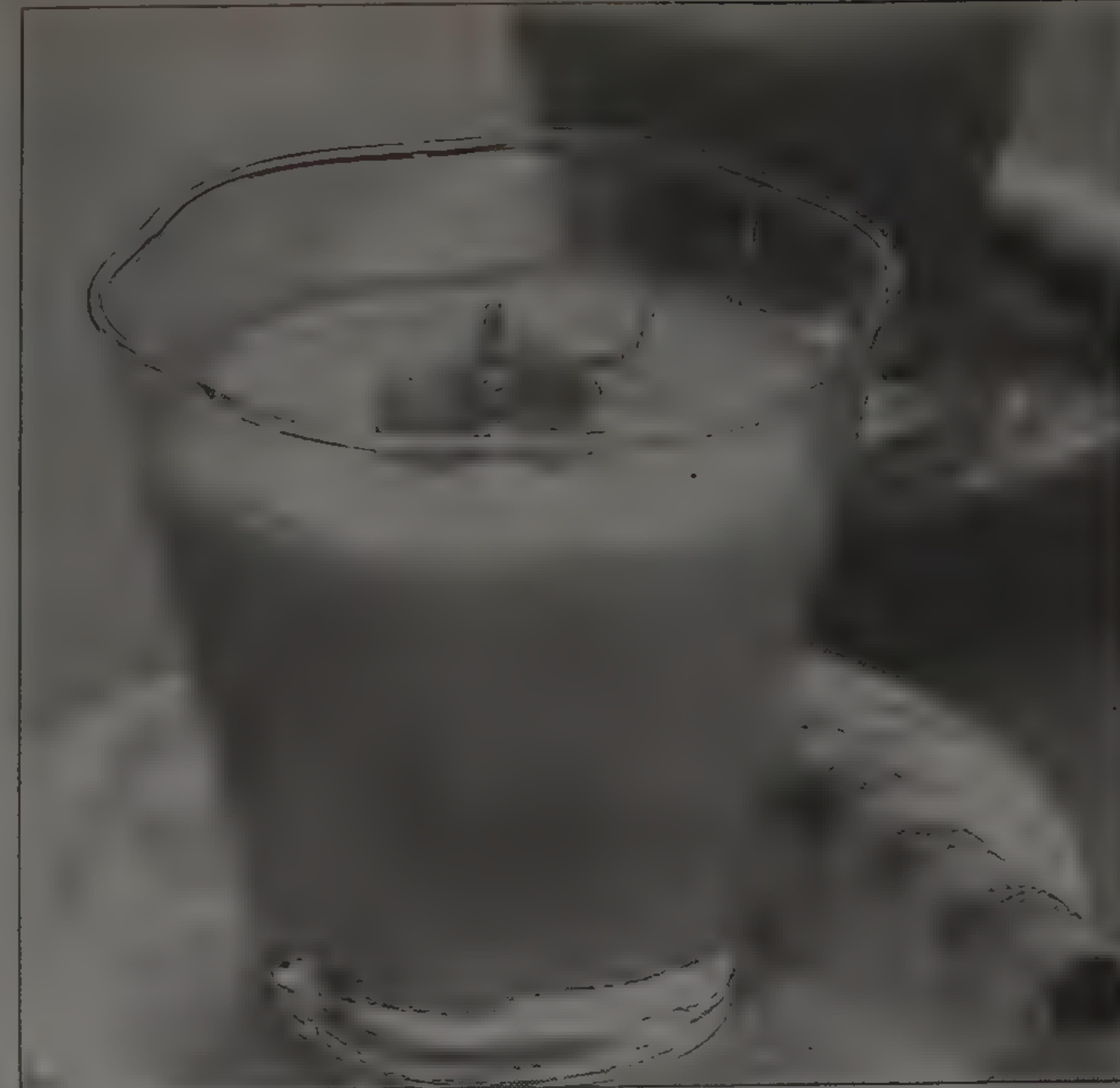
DISH BACTERIA

"Yogurt contains probiotics, the good bacteria that keep the intestinal tract healthy," says Cynthia Stadd, a New York City-based integrative nutrition and holistic health specialist. "They work by balancing the yeast levels in your gut, and they fight the bad bacteria, meaning less bloating and gas, and more regular digestion."

These good bacteria have also been proven to shorten the course of infectious diarrhea in children, lessen antibiotic-associated diarrhea, and may help "maintain remission of ulcerative colitis and prevent a relapse of Crohn's disease," according to the Harvard Women's Health Watch newsletter. Some natural health practitioners also support the idea that good bacteria can increase general immunity, help treat acne and stomach ulcers and keep women's vaginal and urinary tracts healthy, though studies are not yet conclusive.

THE BENEFICIAL BACTERIA (at least two types, and sometimes four or more) are listed on the label. Better-quality yogurts generally contain more varieties of bacteria (and tend to cost more).

"More bacteria is better," Stadd explains, partially because different bacteria do different jobs. *L. reuteri*



bacteria specifically targets *E. coli* and *Salmonella* bacteria by inhibiting their growth in the gut. A November 2005 study in Environmental Health showed that adults who regularly ingested *L. reuteri* reported a reduced number of respiratory and gastrointestinal infections.

The ingredient list on the yogurt container offers a wealth of information beyond its bacterial content. "A big issue with yogurts is that some are full of sugar," says Stadd. "People think they're eating something healthy but they're not. Get plain yogurt and add fresh fruit or a natural

sweetener like agave or maple syrup." Steer clear of "fruit" in fruit-on-the-bottom yogurts as well, which spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association Althea Zinckowski explains is "just like eating jelly." It contains fruit, but it does not count toward the recommended daily servings of fiber.

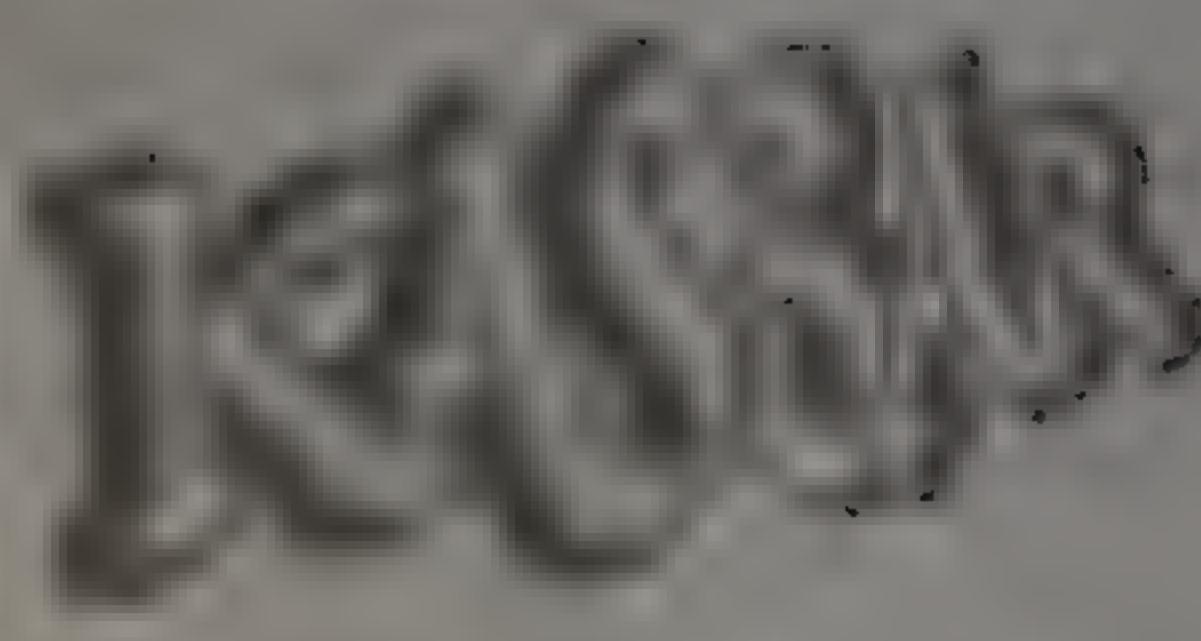
The average consumer eats more than 150 pounds of refined sugar a year, mostly through processed and snack foods. Moderation is the key.

"Eating a sweetened yogurt is still a better choice than a candy bar. Your choices should depend on what else you've eaten that day," says Zinckowski.

Brown Cow yogurt is an exception; the company's Fruit and Whole Grain yogurts are sweetened with maple syrup or naturally milled sugar, and come with sunflower and flax seeds, quinoa, rolled oats and barley on the bottom.

IN THE EARLY 1990S, all fat was considered a health hazard, but recent studies have indicated that certain types belong in a healthy diet. Stadd recommends eating full-fat organic yogurts—but eating less of them, since flavour lost when fat is removed is often made up for in added sugars.

"The fat is there for a reason, just eat it in moderation. It's always better to eat a whole food," says Stadd. Zinckowski disagrees, advising consumers



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to "find the lowest fat that you will actually enjoy eating. If you're eating it plain, non-fat might not do it for you. If you're making smoothies or adding cereal to the yogurt, non-fat is a better choice."

Organic is an important consideration for people who enjoy fattier yogurts, since toxins are stored in the fat cells of mammals. To produce organic yogurt, cows are fed grass or organically grown grains, which cannot include animal byproducts. In addition, organic cows are not given prophylactic antibiotics and are bovine growth hormone (rBGH)-free. Organic cows must also have access to outdoor areas.

Many small farmers (such as those who sell their wares at the local farm stand or specialty store) cannot afford the expensive certification process to enable them to sell their yogurt under the organic label, but they may be engaged in organic processes nonetheless. Most farmers are very open about what they do and do not do with their animals, so don't be afraid to ask.

Goat's milk yogurt is more easily digestible and has less cholesterol than cow's milk, and has a milder flavour than sheep's milk yogurt or goat cheese. Sheep's milk yogurt has a relatively strong flavour, but contains twice as much protein, 50 percent more calcium and half the amount of carbohydrates of cow's milk yogurt. But it's not an easy product to find. Farmer's markets are the best places to look, though some online retailers ship to homes.

Soy yogurts, like other soy products, have been gaining in popularity, and most of the major brands, such as Silk and Whole Soy, have added the same kinds of bacteria to their yogurts as their animal-milk counterparts. Amy Lanou, assistant professor of nutrition at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, recommends soy yogurts.

"There is no difference in the quality of soy protein as compared to dairy," says Lanou. "Soy is every bit as good for promoting muscle growth, and soy yogurts are fortified so their nutritional profile is as good as animal-milk varieties."

Some doctors advise patients with breast cancer and other hormone-sensitive conditions to limit their soy intake (soy contains phytoestrogens, which can act like estrogen in the body), but others can aim for a balanced diet that includes soy yogurt.

"You don't want to eat too many servings of any one type of food," Lanou cautions. "You should concentrate on eating a variety of foods." ▶

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GRANT SQUIRES / grant@vneweekly.com

I was walking through Edmonton's historic Grandin district, looking east over the small bridge where 109 Avenue meets 110 Street; it smelled like rain on concrete and the sky was a wash of many shades of

A neon sign leaning slightly to the right stood out in contrast to the gloomy afternoon. The patio was empty, but patio furniture stood ready close-by, should the wet weather briefly break. Inside the front door, the radio played soft rock barely audible over the sounds of steaming milk and the humming dessert cooler, in which I quickly noted some fantastic-looking sweets.

Entry into **Zuppa Café** smelled of breads, cut vegetables and ground coffee while soft yellow walls, adorned with colourful art and hangings, pulled me from the gloom outside and delivered me into a calmer state. Friendly staff chatted with regulars and went about their tasks with smiles, which only added to the pleasant atmosphere.

I dropped my bag on one of the stools at a thin table running the length of the front window, then joined a short line at the front counter. Zuppa staff was very helpful in recommending selections and discussing their fare with me. While deciding on a vegetable panini (\$5.75) and a soup of the day (\$2 with any

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meal), I learned about their breads, soups and desserts, which were all made fresh daily. I asked for a raspberry Steaz (\$2.25) from their variety of health-wise pops and juices, and took it with me to sit at the window.

Though I had missed the busier lunchtime rush, the café was still populated by several locals dressed in windbreakers and light sweaters; a table of men in business attire relaxed over newspapers and cups of the café's free-trade organic coffee. Many visit the café on their much-deserved lunch breaks from working at the Legislature, located just a couple of blocks to the southeast. An elderly gentleman adjusted his glasses over a crossword while waiting for friends.

AFTER A COUPLE of minutes, the vegetable ham soup arrived with a smile and was laid on the red bar-style table I occupied. I pushed my papers aside and let the soup cool while surveying the sights inside the café. Four wooden tables lined one wall and a few others were scattered through the middle of the cosy coffee house. A series of small tin buckets hung from the wall above the coffee prep area, where they cleverly served as holders



for condiments and utensils; a selection of newspapers was available to the side.

Outside the rain was coming down harder and the delicious scents from the soup were beginning to be too much. It's a fine thing to chill out with a warm bowl of soup and just watch the rain fall; in Edmonton, spring comes on so quickly that you can almost watch the grass and trees become green.

The colourful soup was rich and flavourful. I enjoyed its thicker consistency and plenty of tasty chunks of tomato, carrot and tender ham. Its quality set it apart from many that you'd find in cafés where they do not

put the effort into making their soups from scratch.

Outdoors, a puppy with spots of black, white and brown captured my attention as my substantially-sized sandwich came out. The dog was tangled in a red leash and was freed by its owner who exited Zuppa with his lunch, followed by a waitress who wished to meet the rambunctious little one.

On my plate, lightly grilled pieces of focaccia bread were pressed together around delectable red peppers, grilled zucchini and plenty of melted mozzarella cheese in addition to a thin layer of tangy vegetable spread. The bread was light, tasting of herbs, and

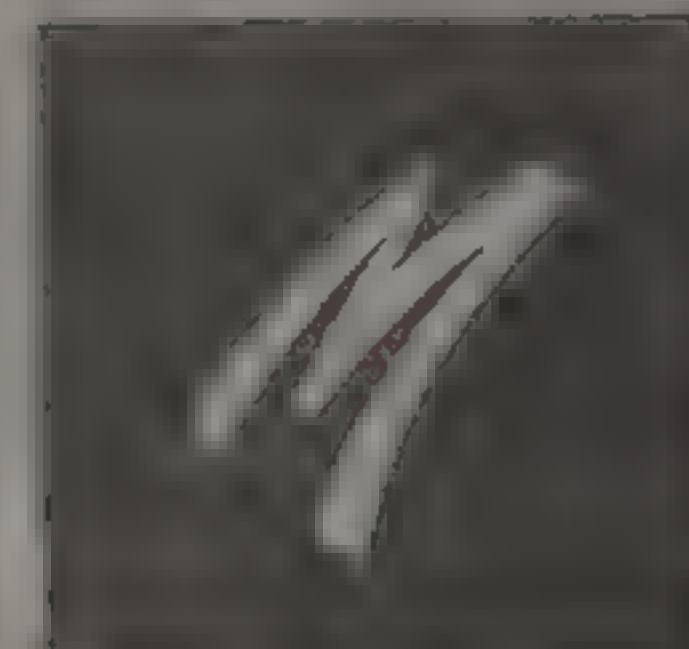
beautifully supported the cheese and fresh veggies.

I washed each bite down with my carbonated raspberry Steaz, which complemented Zuppa's health-conscious menu items and offered something different from so many of the same brands repeated from store to store. Finishing up the meal and nursing my drink, I savoured the relaxed vibe of the place, taking in the serenity of the inside atmosphere before wandering back into what was soon to become a windy rainstorm outside.

The helpful staff at Zuppa was conversational and kind, praising repeatedly their much-appreciated regular customers. Their menu contained many daily specials for pastas, soup and sandwiches; fresh salads on a plate or wrapped in fresh pita bread; or omelettes and other breakfast selections for the early risers. Nothing on the menu is over 10 dollars, making Zuppa a very reasonably-priced stop for delicious fare with a great atmosphere.

Conveniently located in a handsome, quiet neighbourhood, Zuppa is a stone's throw from the entrance to the Grandin LRT station, and the café has kept the feel of a family-run enterprise. With thoughtful product choices like free-trade coffee and homemade soups, breads and sweets, I know they'll continue to provide a cosy and familiar spot for anyone to come in out of the rain. ▶

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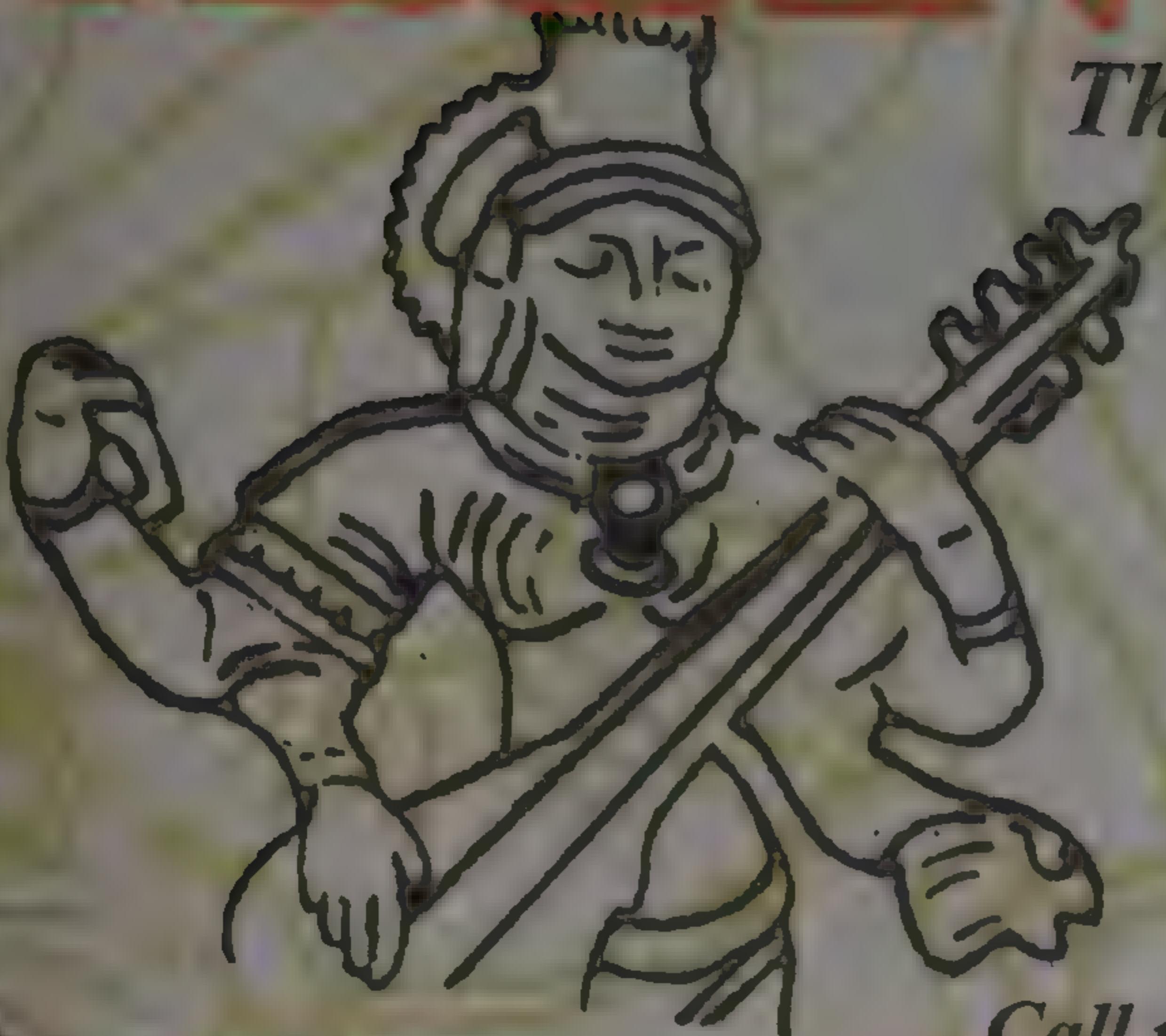
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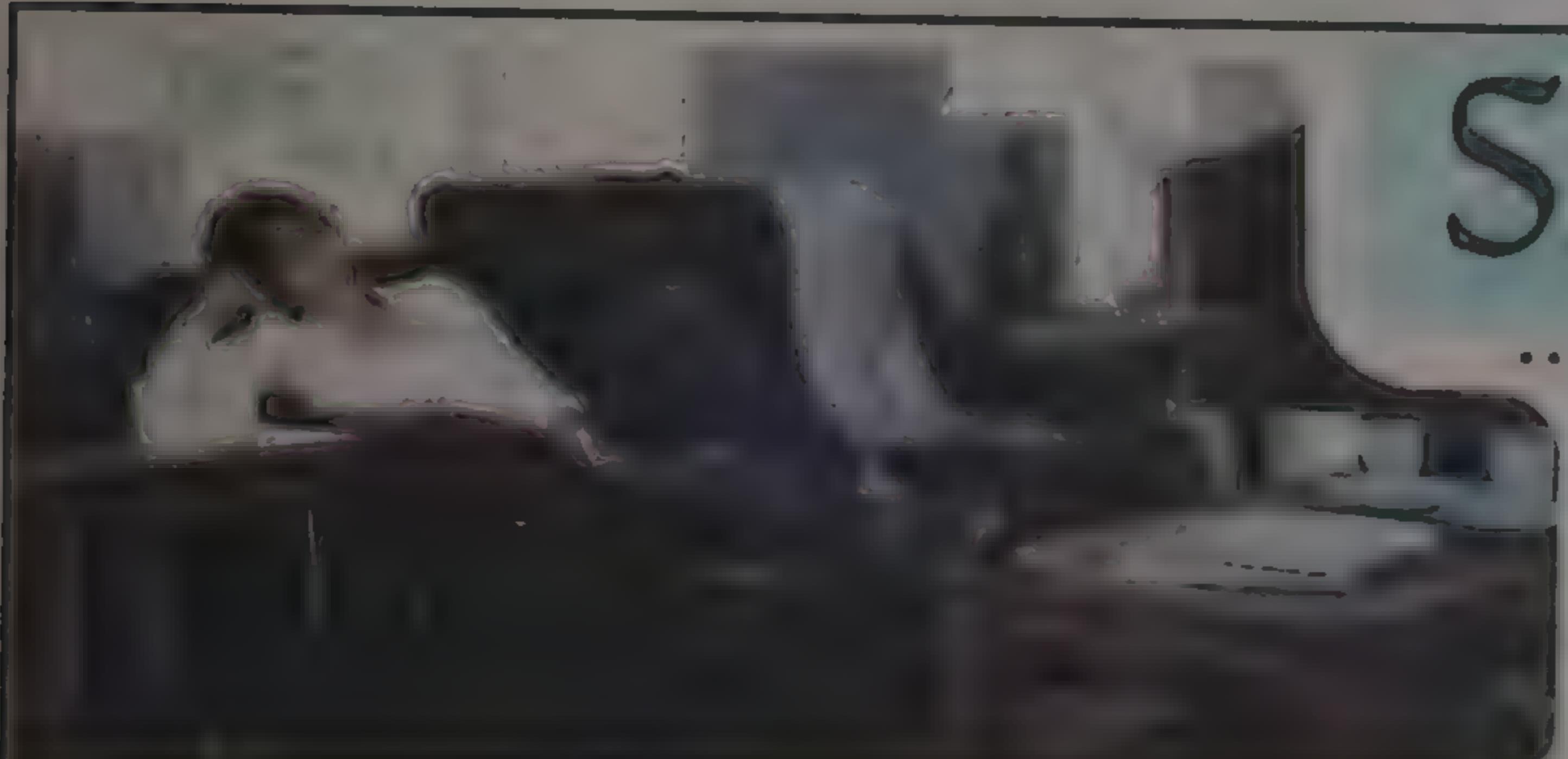
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Die-Hards awarded awards

DIRTY LAUNDRY

DIE-NASTY
JON SEMINAR
dirtylaundry@vneweekly.com

Organist Jean Hammond loves the loose sex but her lover, team owner Ty, is still in love with his wife. Meanwhile, trophy wife Cheryl Oogachaka wowed in a tight black jumpsuit and Ray-Bans; she's renovating the house in linoleum. Bartender Laurel Canyon feels "Fantastic!" ... see, she's going to try and make it work with commentator Skeets. And team Captain Derrick Capilano dazzled in a pink shirt and a thick gold choker; for good luck, he's not going to shower during the playoffs.

Skeets wanted to take Cheryl with him to Houston while he worked as a commentator there. But when he found out she was spooning with Doris Doo-bie-Excellent, the team's resident astro-clairvoyant. Skeets took it badly; hurt, dejected, he angrily delivered his proposal anyway and Cheryl's reaction was cold.

Meanwhile, team doctor Bueno Excellent was hanging out with two of his ex-girlfriends, Jean and bartendress Laurel Canyon, and he found it no problem to arrange a threesome; Laurel was already raving about the "Love Juice" he prescribed for her earlier.

Burl Minsky, father of the team's young superstar Dwayne Minsky, was in Montréal trying to find his son to bring him home. With Burl was Stephanie Spellcheck—Dwayne's biggest underage fan and, if he wishes, future wife. The two of them wandered into a French biker bar and Stephanie was abducted, but she turned up later, with Burl and the entire biker gang, in the drunk tank.

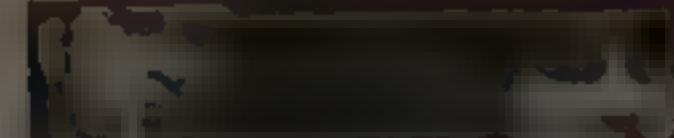
This week, the annual NHL awards were awarded. The Die-Hards' goalie won Goalie of the Year, but he was too busy playing golf to accept so Cheryl went for him. Sadly, while Laurel Canyon was accepting Booster of the Year, Skeets managed to hit her with a microphone that broke her nose. Later, with Laurel's nasal can long elevated, she waved off Skeets's one-winded apology.

As the awards wound down Captain Capilano sat with his friends and realized suddenly, that he should be worried about his missing wife. Ty found some solitude, and sang a Cohen-style song about how good a year it has been, and Burl and Stephanie managed to tunnel out of the drunk tank.

Next week may or may not see the return of The Good One, Dwayne Min-

sky. ▼

THEATRE: DIAMOND DOG / 32



THEATRE: OLIVER! / 33



BOOKS: HOPSCOTCH / 34

Fortier cultivates his *Garden of Objects*

SHERRY DAWN KNETTLE / sherry@vneweekly.com

When Paul-André Fortier was in Japan recently—creating his latest collaborative work *Solo 1 x 60, A Garden of Objects*—his set designer Takao Minami surprised him with a new set piece.

"He found it one afternoon when he went to the ocean," Fortier explains. "He was swimming, and found this thing—a huge piece of Styrofoam shaped like a big egg."

"And one day he came into the theatre and he says, 'I think we'll place this in the landscape and see if it belongs to what we're doing.' And it did, so we kept it," Fortier continues, explaining further about his set, which is a series of strange objects that, together on stage, invoke the mood of a Japanese garden.

"*1 x 60* was created for the environment," Fortier says, describing how the objects inspired and influenced his choreography. "I'm dancing in that garden, beside the objects and sometimes partnering with them. There's a cardboard box, very plain, but I'm doing a beautiful duet with it."

There's also a big television, presenting a succession of abstract animations created by Minami, while a camera above the stage, which follows Fortier's journey through the space, dictates the sequence in which they will be shown.



PREVIEW

THU, MAY 10 & FRI, MAY 11 (8 PM)
**SOLO 1 X 60:
A GARDEN OF OBJECTS**
BY FORTIER DANSE-CREATION
JOHN L HAAR THEATRE (10045 - 156 STREET),
\$15 - \$25

"It's also projected onto Mylar loops, which reflect on the site. This

creates a wonderful visual effect that is very Japanese," Fortier explains. "It's so ephemeral, like aurora borealis dancing between the loops. It's extremely beautiful!"

"The piece is extremely poetic. It's really a mixture of two different cultures," he adds, describing the collaboration between himself, his

Canadian crew and visual artist Minami, who had never before designed a set for the stage.

FORTIER AGREES THAT the work can be described as "site specific," because the movement is inspired by the space in which it takes place, much like his work *Solo 30 x 30*, which he was performing in Japan when he was invited to create his new work at the Yamaguchi Centre.

30 x 30 is a 30-minute work, for instance, created for an outdoor city space. It was performed for 30 successive days in five different cities, including a bridge in Ottawa during last year's Canada Dance Festival—where, as he danced to the sounds of the city, Fortier managed to create a sense of silence all around him.

"It made people think about the lack of beauty and communication, and the blindness we develop in the city," Fortier says, describing the sense of urban tension that pervades both works.

1 x 60, a 60-minute work for an indoor space is a philosophical response to how the city affects us, he explains.

"I have the feeling in this piece that I'm always dancing on a tightrope. It's a fragile performance. People on tightropes are so beautiful but precarious because they're always in danger." ▼

Keep your characters from mouthing off

DAVID BERRY / david@vneweekly.com

There's little more to teaching an artist, it's been said, than opening the door and showing them the tightrope. That probably holds more truth than any number of people who make a living teaching art want to admit, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's not a good idea to practice your balance before rushing through the door, which is where Marty Chan and the Alberta Playwrights Network are hopefully going to come in with their new discussion series focused on all things playwriting.

The first one, entitled *Mouth Off: A Dramatic Monologue Writing Forum* will, surprisingly, aim to make everyone's dramatic monologues a little more "to be or not to be" and a little less extended, languishing, no-end-in-sight character exposition. As Chan, the APN's current playwright-in-residence, explains, the idea of the sessions is to focus on specific aspects of playwrit-

ing, sifting through the nuances and intricacies of each, as opposed to the more generic, catch-all sessions that playwriting tutorials can tend to be.

"Playwriting workshops tend to cover the entire basics, sort of from soup to nuts," Chan says. "You never really see something very specific explored in these workshops, which is what we're hoping to do here. Obviously every different element of writing a play has many different facets to it, so we're hoping to shed some light on those by exploring them more deeply than you normally get in the basic workshops."

To that end, Chan has recruited fellow playwright Connie Massing and CBC Alberta Anthology producer Allan Boss—who just happens to be running a competition for dramatic monologues—as well as actors Beth Graham and Jared Matsanuga-Turnbull, who will be performing a small selection of monologues, to help aspiring and experienced writers alike get a bead on what a monologue should be.

THOUGH CHAN'S A MAN who has no small experience writing dramatic monologues—from his Sterling-nominated and winning plays, most notably *Mom, Dad, I'm Living With a White Girl*, to his work with both the CBC and the *Edmonton Journal* as a humorous essayist—Chan nevertheless admits that they can be one of the toughest rows to hoe when it comes to writing a play. They tend to be something that everyone writes, but few people write well, and he hopes that *Mouth Off* can serve as a

guide to getting past the common pitfalls, making them something that's as enjoyable to experience as it is to write.

"The most basic description of a dramatic monologue is that it's a bunch of words spoken by one character, which is what it can end up as, if you're not careful," says Chan with a laugh. "I think the most common trap when writing a monologue is just having it be a character sketch, without any real drive or purpose to the story. Obviously it has to be providing some kind of insight into the character, but it still has to have some drive, be going somewhere."

"They're one of the hardest things to write, I find," Chan adds, "because not only do you want to say something interesting and important, to make it a really good piece of writing, but you have to find a way to fit it in with the play, to really give it a strong purpose within the play, which together can be quite challenging." ▼

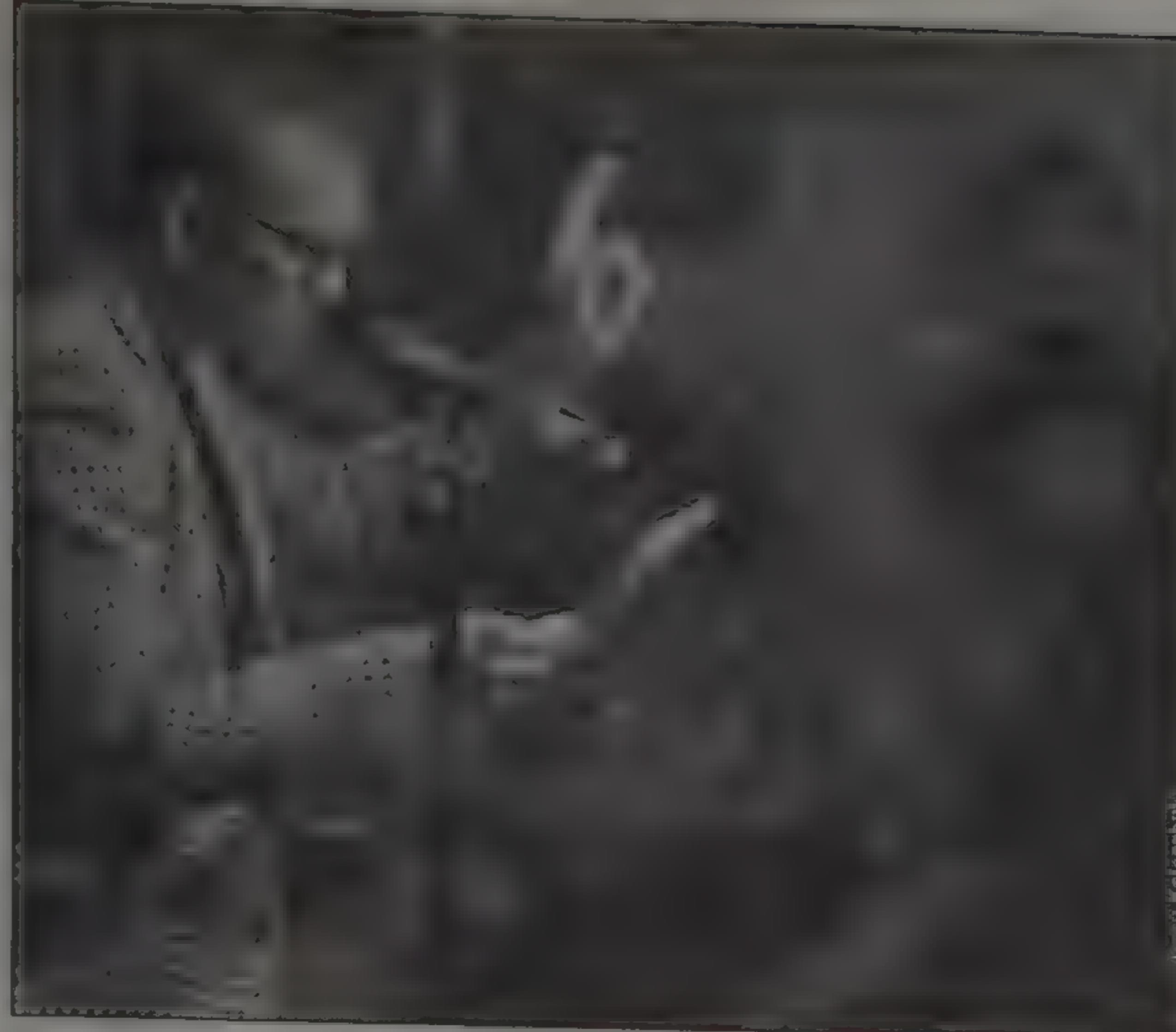
So, what's your story?

DAVID BERRY / david@vneweekly.com

A little over a year since Susan Hagan launched Edmonton's Story Slam, she couldn't be more pleased with the results.

"For something we made up based on what a few other cities do, it's amazing how much it's come to mean to all of us who are involved," Hagan says, brimming with an audible delight over the phone. "The calibre of stories is just phenomenal, and it just pushes everyone to get even better—they compete as much with themselves as with the other people, I think, trying to do better each time. And the community that's come together around it, too, is just wonderful: it's been just over a year—February of 2006 it started—and we've seen friendships and romances bloom, which is one of the things I was really hoping for when I was putting this together."

The monthly affair—hosted at the Blue Chair Café on the third Wednesday of every month, to be precise—is celebrating its success over the past year-and-a-bit with its first annual **Slam-Off**, Story Slam's version of *Top Gun*. Basically, that means 10 of the monthly winners, and one, ahem, lucky draw winner will gather on the stage to compete for the chance to be the best of the best, in the usual format: a five-minute slot with which to tell your story, followed by a judging at the hands of five randomly-picked



PREVIEW

WED, MAY 16 (8 PM)
SLAM OFF
BLUE CHAIR CAFÉ (9624- 76 AVENUE), \$5

audience members.

Even though the event will feature 10 people who have become regulars at Story Slam, Hagan admits that, aside from top-quality, she still doesn't know what to expect. If they're

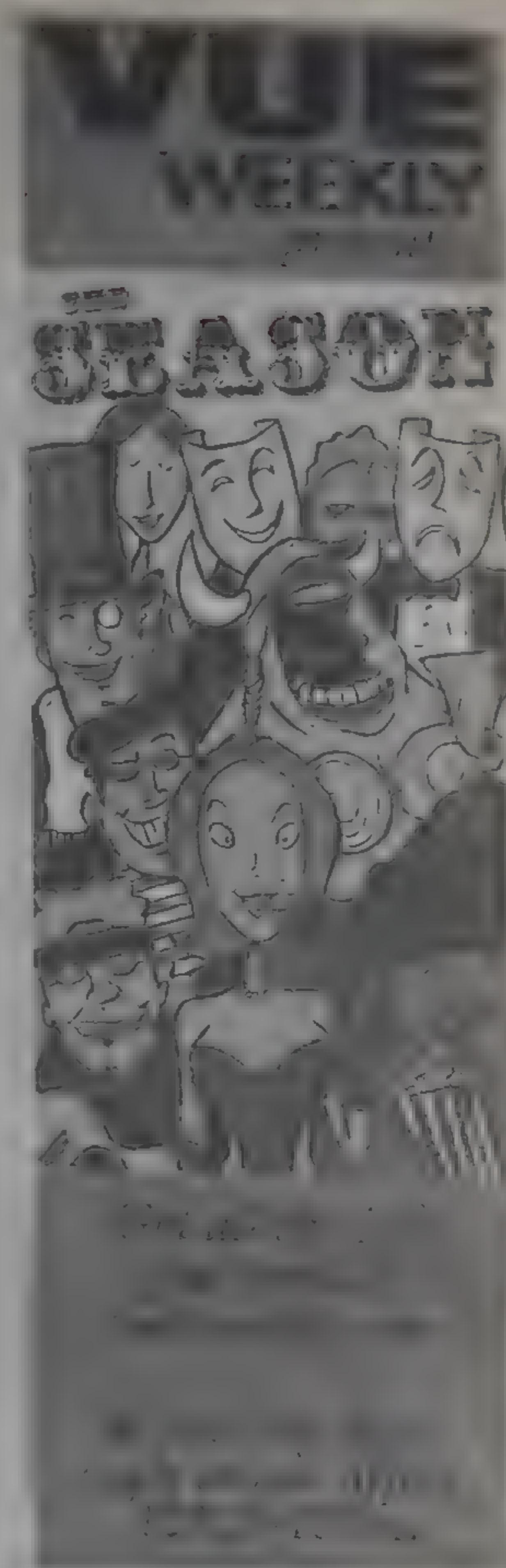
anything like the tales that won them a spot in the Slam Off, though, odds are they'll be funny, poignant and, above all, well-told.

"My standard description of a Story Slam contestant is that it's mix between being a writer and a performer, and I don't really think you can sacrifice one or the other," says Hagan. "I don't think we've had any professional actors or anything like that, but I know we've had a few people

who consider themselves professional writers show up and get humbled by the quality of people around them, both in terms of the performances and the actual stories that are being told."

OF COURSE, MORE important than who wins, according to Hagan, is fostering the Story Slam atmosphere, which she describes as one that manages to be both competitive and nurturing. Though she hopes to have some special prizes for each contestant—the standard top prize of money donated by spectators will still be on hand—ultimately what she really hopes is that the Slam Off encourages more people to come check out the event and even, if they're feeling up to it, try their own hand at rapid-fire storytelling.

"I think the best thing about it is that people really feel like they can come up stage and let it all out, that they don't have to hide, that they're not going to be judged," she says before pausing, and letting out a laugh. "Well, of course, their work is going to be judged, but they can still say anything they want. I think a lot of the storytellers have found out up there that, unique as we are, we're all the same, too, and it's been a pleasant surprise for all of us to find out that we're not freaks, that there are a bunch of people out there who can relate to us." □

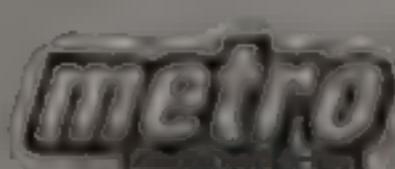


Jason Trachtenburg
slide show conception

Bouncing Bobby Wiseman
and the phonemes

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Diamond Dog dazzles in delightful thuggery

DAVID BERRY / david@vneweekly.com

BELINDA CORNISH really shouldn't have compared *Diamond Dog* to Guy Ritchie movies. Not that, in many ways, the comparison isn't apt: Cornish's play certainly breathes the same air as Ritchie's gangster pieces, where the thugs are crudely loquacious, the violence is eloquently blunt, the humour is refreshingly dry and an aura of unmistakable cool hangs over the whole affair.

Nevertheless, though, there's something intrinsically cinematic about Ritchie's—and more or less anyone else who practices the same breakneck aesthetic, from Tarantino to Edgar Wright—style, something that even the ample energy director Ken Brown and his cast of nine bring has trouble duplicating without the benefit of rapid-fire edits and zooming shots.

It's sadly inevitable that a stage version of a Ritchie movie will disappoint in comparison, but to thoroughly enjoy Cornish's play, all you really have to do is drop the comparison: taken on its own, *Diamond Dog* is a frequently funny, crackling good time in the theatre.

It opens with four small-time north London hoods—genuine bloke Ronnie (Jon Paterson), mind-numbed Pug (Garett Ross), pissy hot-head Jonesy (Mark Meer) and fresh-mouthed Laura (Alison Boyce)—finding the titular dog when they should be finding the 100-thousand pounds they need to pay off their boss Terry (Brown).

Through a series of threads that are teased out then tied back up, they come across Terry's trophy wife, Mare (Cornish), double-windored psychopath Vinnie (Jeff Halaby), marble-mouthed pet-napper Spig (James Hamilton) and rival debonair crime boss Alberta (Linda Grass) on their way to explaining how they got into the mess in the first place, and getting themselves out of it.

CORNISH HAS HERSELF a script that captures all the fun of being a two-bit thug, and the cast knows it. Brown was born to play the, pardon the expression, 'orrible cunt he draws here, 200 pounds of pissed-off violence with a vicious sarcasm to boot, and he might not even be the best.

Hamilton, who's yet to meet a role



REVIEW

TO SAT, MAY 19 (8 PM)
DIAMOND DOG
DIRECTED BY KEN BROWN
WRITTEN BY BELINDA CORNISH
STARRING JON PATERSON, MARK MEER,
GARETT ROSS, ALISON BOYCE, BROWN,
CORNISH, LINDA GRASS, JEFF HALABY,
JAMES HAMILTON, ATOM
CATALYST THEATRE (8529 - 103 STREET), \$12 - \$15;
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he didn't throttle, is perfect as the type of idiot who's so greasy he thinks he's slick, but my favourite was probably

Ross, who brings, perhaps appropriately, a kind of puppy-dog affability to his idiot savant, making out the odd shape in the headlights he's so obviously standing in the path of.

The only real complaint—beyond the comparison thing—is probably that, with all that's going on, there are some characters we could stand to see more of. The dynamic between Meer and Boyce—a thoroughly challenged lunkhead versus a pistol-smart redhead who almost inconceivably loves him—is only touched on in one funny but almost tossed-off scene outside a bar, which is a shame, because there was some excellent grit between the two actors that's left largely behind the curtain. When you're complaining about not seeing more, though, you're not really complaining about anything at all, a fairly nice way to sum up the overall effect of *Diamond Dog*.

So long as you don't read the previews, the play leaves you feeling like the way the best gangster movies should: wanting to be one of the smooth-talking thugs you just saw. ▶

Megatunes

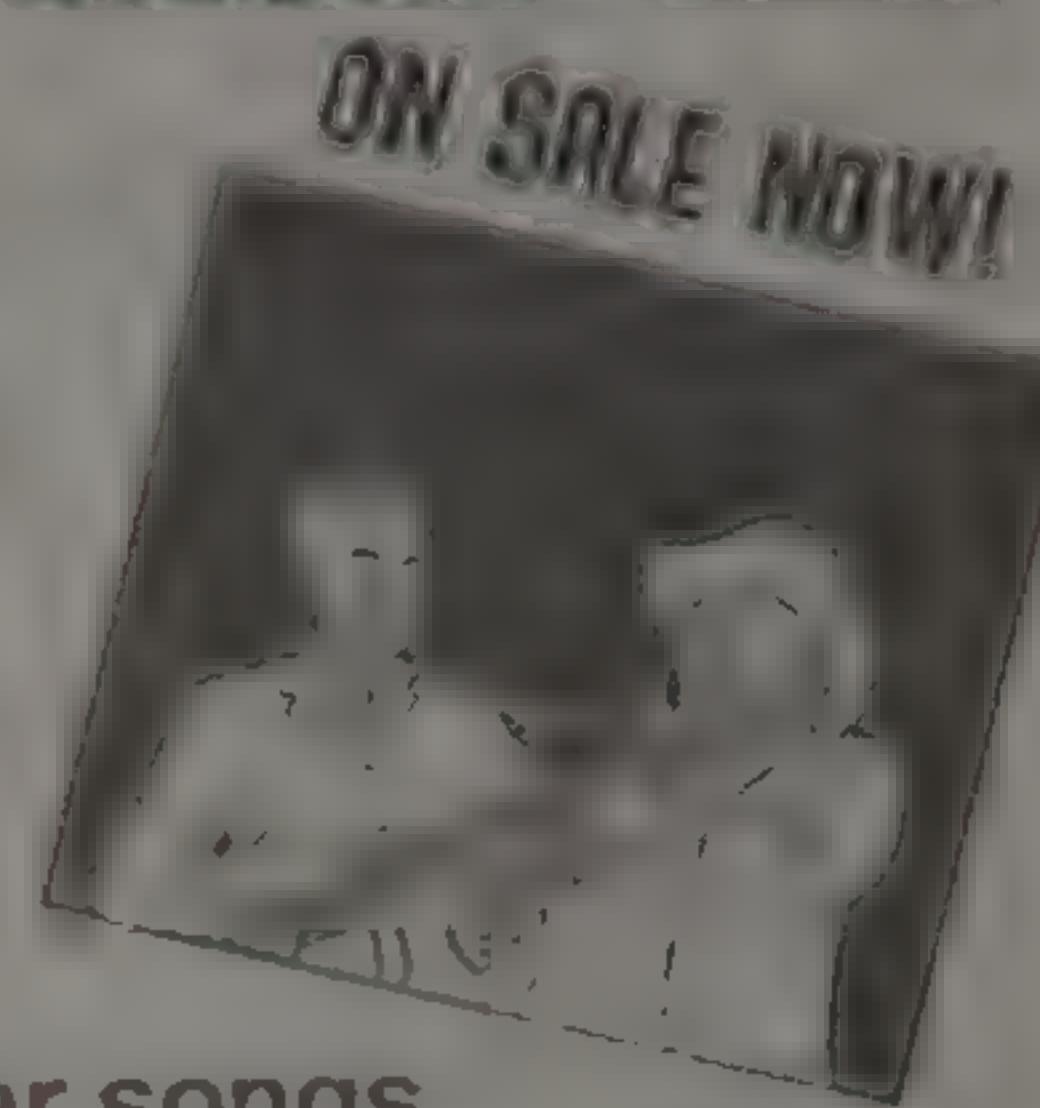
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6. Dinosaur Jr. - Beyond (anti)
7. Ry Cooder - My Name Is Buddy (nonesuch)
8. Kings Of Leon - Because Of The Times (rca)
9. Modest Mouse - We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank (epic)
10. VNV Nation - Judgement (merchants)
11. Blonde Redhead - 23 (4ad)
12. Various - A Tribute To Joni Mitchell (nonesuch)
13. Bruce Springsteen - West (cordova bay)
14. Neil Young - Live At Massey Hall 1971 (reprise)
15. Bill Callahan - Work On A Wicked Heart (drag city)
16. The White Stripes - My Name Is My Name (anti)
17. Peter Bjorn And John - Writers Block (almost gold)
18. Arctic Monkeys - Favourite Worst Nightmare (domino)
19. The Shins - Wincing The Night Away (sub pop)
20. John Wayne Gacy - Two Bit Suckers (her)
21. Peter Holsom - Late In The Night (m.c. records)
22. Tom Waits - Orphans (anti)
23. Elliott Smith - New Moon (kill rock stars)
24. Harry Manx & Kevin Breit - In Good We Trust (stony plain)
25. Bill Bourne - Boon Tang (cordova bay)
26. Amy Winehouse - Back To Black (universal)
27. LCD Soundsystem - Sound Of Silver (dfa)
28. Arctic Monkeys - Hissing Fausts, Are You The Destroyer? (poly/mr)
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POETRY

ARTS

Consider yourself a
small part of a catchy
musical, Oliver!

DAVID BERRY / david@vnewswEEKLY.com

For a titular character, Oliver Twist sure doesn't have much to do. Having never read Dickens's original, I can't say if that's just the way the story goes, but watching the Citadel's production of *Oliver!*, it was hard not to notice that the ostensible main character (played ably if meekly by Mark McClintock) was almost as superfluous to the story as any of the other urchins running around Fagin's thieves' den.

His major conflicts and choices essentially begin and end with "Please, Sir, I want some more," as from that moment on he's little more than glue, lightly applied at that, for immorally catchy songs by most of the adults.

That, as well as the fact the second half of the musical feels like a madish attempt to fit three-quarters of a novel's worth of detail into three-quarters of an hour of theatre, creates

garters of an hour of theatre, creates an overall impression that *Oliver!* is more than 16 catchy songs in search of an appropriate vehicle, and that *Oliver Twist* was evidently pliable enough for Lionel Bart to shape it to his golden-eared whim.

Bart may have just written some of the most purely hummable music in history of musical theatre, though, so good it transcends not only a fairly bare-bones structure, but also the incredibly annoying '60s musical habits of it being incredibly obvious when they're about to burst into song ("We're repeating / the line we emphasized / except this time / more rhythmically!") and destroying any real sense of darker emotion (it's hard to be scared/sad/whatever when the entirety of the onstage company starts moonizing seven seconds later).

THE CITADEL'S PRODUCTION benefits greatly from the fact that Bob Baker is nothing if not a consummate

89

TO SUN, JUN 3
OLIVER!
DIRECTED BY BOB BAKER
LYRICS AND BOOK BY LIONEL BART
STARRING MARK MCCLINTOCK,
TIMOTHY DOWLER-COLTMAN, LARRY YACHIMEC,
JOHN DLYATT, CORRIE KOSLO, PAMELA GORDON
CITADEL THEATRE (9828 - 101 A AVENUE),
\$55 - \$80

showman, and he shines up almost every one of these already sparkling numbers until it gleams like a showstopper.

Larry Yachimec as Fagin, who I've yet to see in a performance I wasn't enthralled with, and Pamela Gordon as Nancy, who was similarly excellent in *West Side Story*, battle it out for best performance, with an exasperated but wily rendition of "Reviewing the Situation" and profoundly wrenching, virtuosic "As Long As He Needs Me," respectively, but they are only the brightest in a production full of lights.

The glorious and slightly campy opener, "Food Glorious Food" sets things off on the right note, and John Ulyatt's snarling fighter's take on "My Name" leaves even the smell of his thoroughly depraved Bill Sykes covering the stage.

None of that necessarily makes up for the fact the play is basically a voice in terms of emotional or psychological attachment, but I strongly suspect that's precisely none of the care of a musical like this anyway.

As a showpiece, it works well enough to have you humming songs with no provocation almost a week later, occasionally ear-worming its way to the accompanying mental images of Yachimec's prancing around picking a pocket or two or the entire cast imploring you to consider yourself one of the family, and what more do you really want out of a musical that ends in an exclamation

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Sex On Chesil Beach isn't the only novella idea

BOOKS **HOPSCOTCH**
JONATHAN
hopscotch@vneweekly.com

"This was still the era [...] when to be young was a social encumbrance, a mark of irrelevance, a faintly embarrassing condition for which marriage was the beginning of a cure."

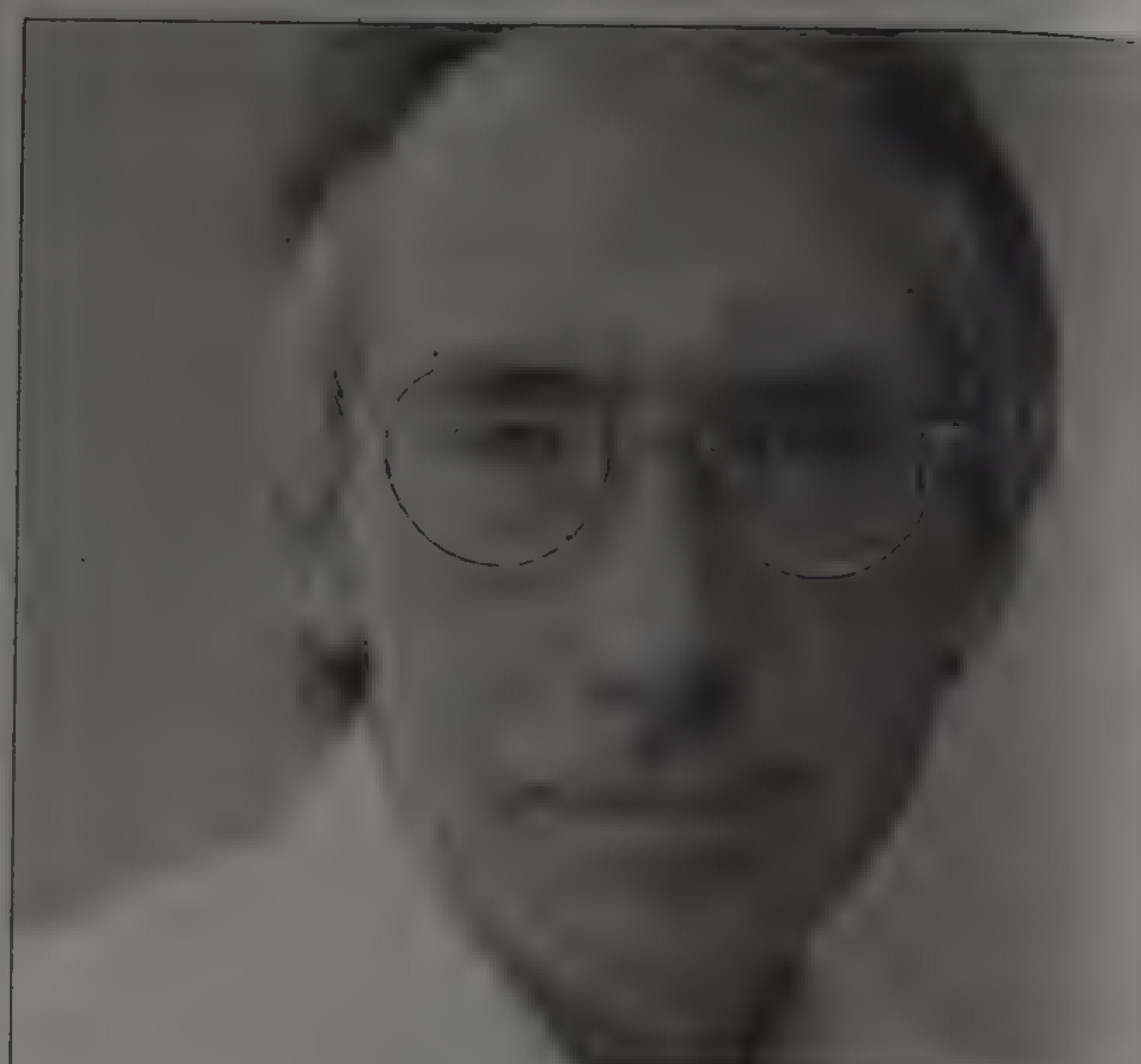
The lovers inhabiting Ian McEwan's *On Chesil Beach* (Knopf, \$27) are, strictly speaking, not yet lovers. In the vivid, tingly first chapter, Edward and Florence are still virgins, though the momentous extinguishing of this status looms. It's their wedding night; they've retired to their rooms in a Georgian inn along the Dorset coast; as teenage waiters serve a hearty meal they've no interest in eating, the four-poster bed stands sentry-like, four symbolic erections brimming with portent and promise, engines of some considerable anxiety for them both.

The year is 1962. By the decade's end sexual mores will have been turned inside out, but for the moment, the restraint exhibited by Edward and Florence, in their early 20s both, is typical of ambitious youngsters eager to don the clothes of legitimate society.

Less typical perhaps is the fact that Florence, in stark contrast to her painfully horny new husband, secretly and absolutely dreads her now-inevitable submission to the sex act. Thus the tension that mounts through *On Chesil Beach* largely concerns the great delicacy of the couple's negotiations regarding consummation. Will Florence come to realize the beauty of fornication? Will Edward "arrive too soon"? Will they have sex at all?

If this premise sounds slight, coming from the acclaimed author of *Enduring Love*, *Atonement* and *Saturday*, it should be said that the stakes are gradually complicated, as McEwan digresses from the night's progression to sift through select scenes from Edward and Florence's short pasts. *On Chesil Beach* will assume a surprising weight toward its end, when McEwan, like a sudden gale, sweeps past this tender wedding night to sum up entire lives in a handful of pages.

Nevertheless, I find it kind of fascinating how deftly McEwan engages the reader with a set-up focused upon something as fleeting as virginity's end. Far more intricate, developed and eventful than a short story, though not quite broad and dramatic enough to fill a novel, *On*



Chesil Beach, in its 167 pages, strikes me as a perfect marriage of content and form—a perfect novella.

McEwan READ THE first chapter of *On Chesil Beach* at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre last week. He read with confidence and clarity, giving nothing away, inciting numerous laughs in his descriptions of fumbling romance, masturbatory

about grand emotions, grand ideas, grand experiences waiting to be transformed? McEwan clearly possesses more than his share of all of these essences, but I like the fact that, at least in this case, he views form as the mother of artistic invention.

FLORENCE IS A talented violinist. Rather than trudge through the ranks of orchestras, she decides to form her own quartet thus devoting her life to chamber music. Complementing Florence's vocation, the novella is the literary equivalent of the chamber piece, guided by restrictions of structure, imagery, voice and theme. Its form McEwan has proven himself most worthy of.

The Comfort of Strangers (1981) was the first of McEwan's novellas I encountered, one that works beautifully, rife with quiet, sinister scenes of wordle tension, striking images, audacious, disquieting monologues. The scope of this tale is limited and rendered seductively lean, hurdling from the realistic to the Gothic, and possessing an appealingly stereotypical depiction of repressed Italian machismo that couldn't possibly have held up in a longer book.

Black Dogs (1992) revolves around a handful of compelling characters and enigmatic incidents rich with detail but well served as sparingly drawn scenes that culminate in less than 150 pages. The depth of the impression it leaves feels tied inextricably to the compactness of its form.

On Chesil Beach finds McEwan once again utilizing the novella as a way to get at singular truths, singular impressions. For all their naivete, he's utterly empathetic to his antsy young couple, respectful of the strange ritual they've found themselves caught in, one so dictated by their placement on the cusp of sexual revolution. And the brevity of the time he spends with them only sharpens the emotional residue left behind. ▶

IAN MCEWAN
On Chesil Beach

PREVIEW / WED, MAY 16 (7 PM) / LOVE STYLES, LOVE SUX: THEATRE NETWORK FASHION FUNDRAISER / ROXY THEATRE, \$20 If you're wondering what to wear on these fantastically lengthening days—or even to the quickly approaching Sterling Awards—you're in luck. Some of Edmonton's coolest designers and locally owned stores will be showcasing their wares all under one of the hippest roofs in town. A perfect treat for a hump-day, Theatre Network's annual fundraiser will feature designs by Gnuda, Gravity Pope, Jaisel, Local 124, Maggie Walt, Red Ribbon and Salgado Fenwick Clothing. Hair will be primped by the able comb connoisseurs at Propaganda Hair Salon. It's nice when all of the locals get together to help each other out. Photo by EDEN MUNRO / eden@vneweekly.com

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From Chengdu to Dirt City: a tale of two art scenes

BY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vneweekly.com
is the best of times; it is the worst of times. Depending on who you talk to, this is either the most awesome or most hideous time ever to be an artist in Edmonton. The reality can be summed up thusly: we believe there is a positive correlation between creative opportunities and the high general level of economic activity here, others feel that local arts and local artists—are being ground under (or thrown under) the same wheels of boomtown industry.

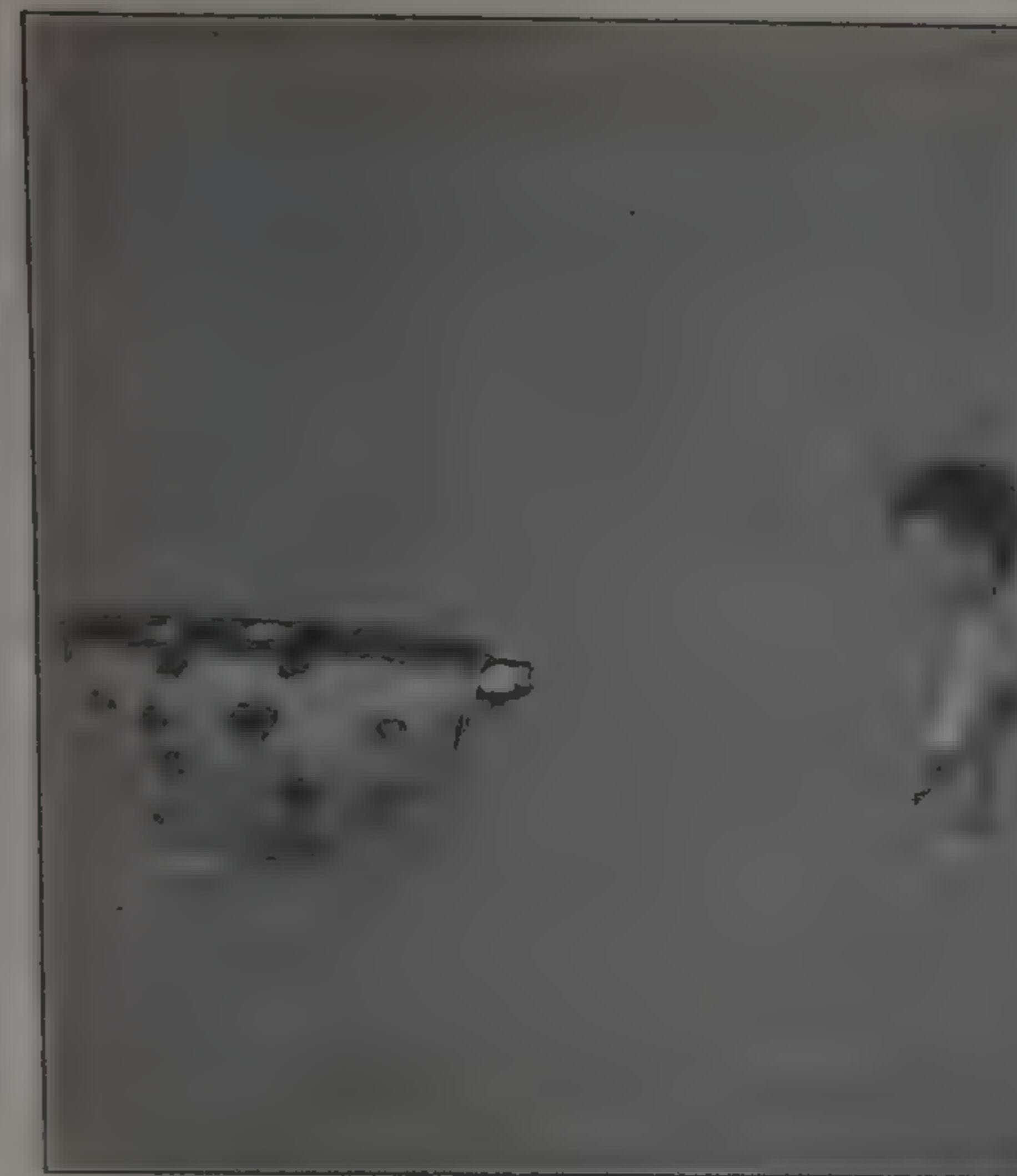
The truth, of course and as always, is that both sides of the spectrum exist along with points in between, although this environment is pushing the range towards extremes at either end. It's certainly not just the Western dance masters who are profiting from having more "ambient" money, trickle-down economics also doesn't work any better for a modern municipal community of artists than it did for the American middle class in

It's doubtful that every one of the artists in *Make It Not Suck*, a strange and charming little urban show that will run all too briefly within the wood-swaddled tunnel that borders the construction site for the on-to-be Sobey's on Jasper Avenue between 104 and 105 Streets, feels completely and constantly embattled embittered by the growth around them. Most of these people—technically anonymous but easily deducible collaborators in a guerrilla exhibition that sprang up on the morning of Sunday, May 6—are E-ville scene stalwarts in their 20s and 30s who flirt with commercialism yet still come home faithfully and lovingly to DIY.

Whether they signed on simply to be part of a bratty wink of a project or is active statement-making, it's hard to escape the conclusion of provocation when a show with the bidding/commanding title of *Make It Not Suck* is installed semi-surrepti-

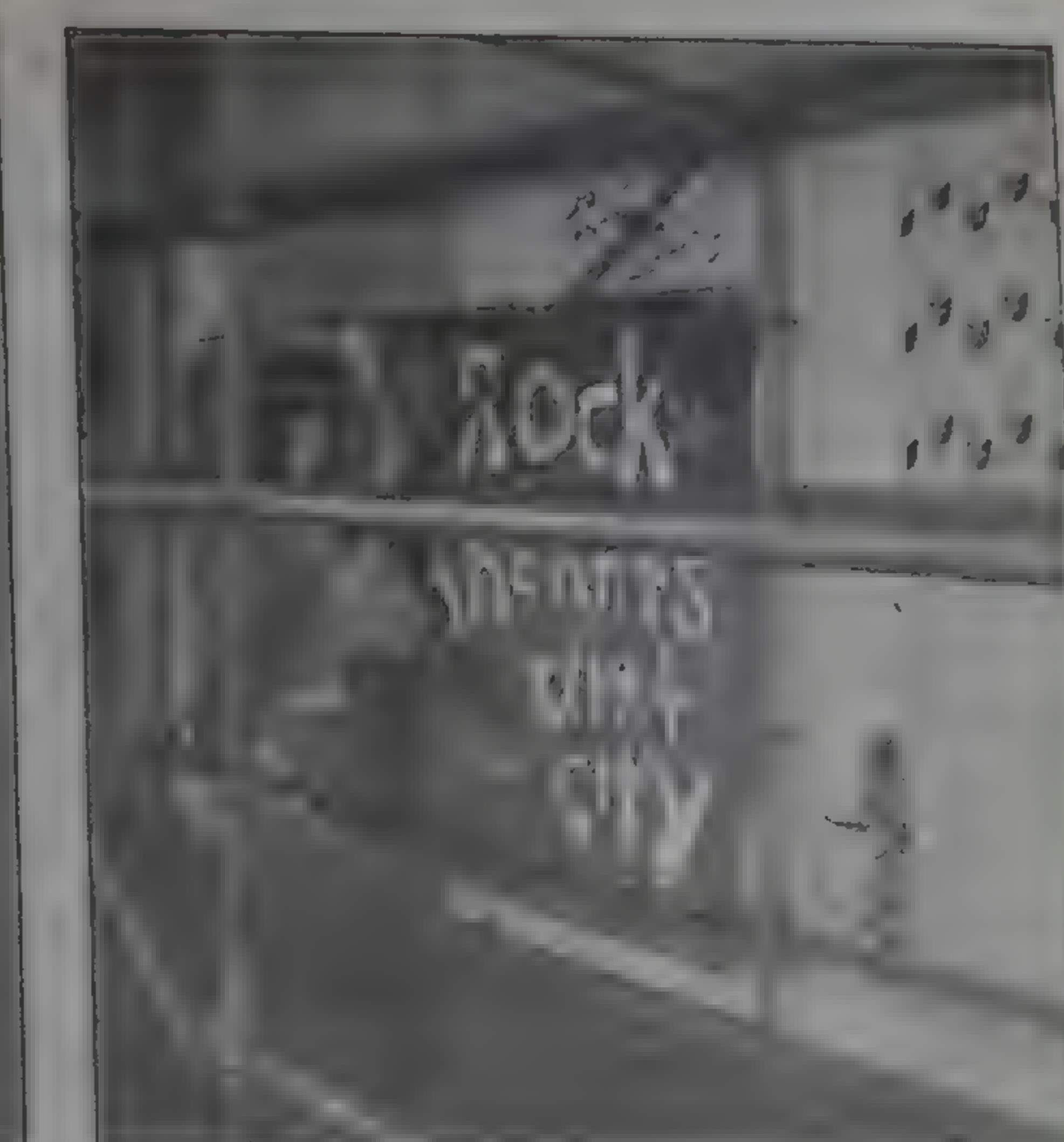
REVUE

TO JUN 10
CHINA SENSATION: NEW ART FROM CHENGDU
WITH YANG CAO, SHUO CHEN, CONGLIN CHENG, XIANG CHENG, YI QIAO, QING HAN, MINGJING HUANG, JING JIANG, PENG JIANG, MAO LI, XUEMING LIAN, SHI LIU, XINTAO LIU, JIE LUO, YUQI LUO, QUANGPING QIU, FENG TIAN, CHENGDIAN WU, YONGKANG XU, CHUNSHENG YANG, HANMEI YANG, GUODIANG ZHANG
ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA (100-10230 JASPER AVENUE)



REVUE

UNTIL IT GETS TORN DOWN
MAKE IT NOT SUCK
VARIOUS SEMI-ANONYMOUS ARTISTS
NORTH SIDE OF JASPER AVENUE,
BETWEEN 104 & 105 STREETS



tiously in the wasteland of crane-addled downtown renewal, only a block over from the city's leading public arts institution.

THE AGA IS IN transition, too, with its current space serving as an interesting container for the gallery while awaiting its finality of purpose as an educational facility. The AGA proper will move on, into a new building. In a matter of months, the gallery's old site on Winston Churchill Square will be a muddy, crane-addled construction pit just like the one *Make It Not Suck* circles precariously like a candy necklace, being picked off piece by piece. (One can only hope that those wooden tunnels will also be defiantly appropriated by a merry band of emerging artists.)

A stone's throw away from *Make It Not Suck*, the walls of the AGA are covered with the work of young artists—paintings, photographs and sculptures rendered skillfully with imagination, wit and energy. However, these artists are not so much the peers of the *Make It Not Suck* gang as their counterparts. *China Sensation: New Art From Chengdu* features 22 artists from the capital city of Sichuan, in yes,

the People's Republic of China, many of them in the same age range as the Edmonton crew, and some even with a sympathetic aesthetic.

For the most part, the artists represented in *Make It Not Suck* are unlikely to be included in the AGA anytime soon. They are too young or too untrained or too undisciplined or too multidisciplinary or too intellectually unruly or simply too disinterested to compete with established names a generation or more ahead of them. Solo shows for locals at the AGA are rare; positional jockeying for the narrow niches that arise can seem both pitiless and pathetic to younger talents disinclined towards the "industry" approach to artmaking.

Both shows are worth seeing (the street art is documented at makeitnotsuck.blogspot.com), and have interesting commonalities and differences.

EPHEMERAL VERSUS TANGIBLE. *Make It Not Suck* has maybe days before it disintegrates through urban decay. *China Sensation* hangs in a pristine protected

environment, with a lush tabletop-book-type catalogue as its afterlife.

DIY versus formal channels. *China Sensation* owes its existence to diplomatic, cultural and economic bridge-building by the AGA and the Brave New World-ishly named Chengdu Profound Culture Promoting Co, Ltd. Extensive studio visits were done, judicious curatorial choices made, and the pieces expertly installed. *Make It Not Suck* was its own only rule, and consisted of a loose knot of art pals mounting work quickly on a sleepy Sunday morning.

"Art in public" versus "public art." Nothing's vulgar, but the artists of *Make It Not Suck* don't seem to be seeking approval, either. AGA has the unenviable job of making Edmonton seem credible as a culturally relevant metropolis outside the region while simultaneously appealing to as many Edmontonians as possible. *China Sensation* walks that something-for-everyone line.

Common themes. Growth generates upheaval. Artworks from both cities

reflect urban paranoia and social anxiety caused by economic transformation. Chengdu artists tend to manifest these as a preoccupation with resources (especially food) and compressed and distorted landscapes while the *Make* crowd dives into sentimentality, indulges in Dada repetition, and leverages the environmental context of their work to evoke those notions. Works from both shows share a dream-like logic and an aesthetic that can be called "earnest whimsy" — playfully engaging a serious topic. Nostalgia and theatricality are endemic to both artist groups, along with using animals and botanical subjects in a pop wonderland/dystopia fantasy. Genre mash-ups are common to both, too: printery sculptures, drawing-ish paintings, painterly photographs, etc.

For a largely unplanned show *Make It Not Suck* has provided the perfect companion piece and response to the meticulous *China Sensation*, reasserting Edmonton's singular place in the world of art with sly, slouchy mirth. □

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DANCE

BRUN WIEBE DANCE COMPANY **UNTITLED** 9103 95 Ave (426-1111) • **EXCELSIOR**: Featuring artworks by Linda Watmough, Urmilla Zoenka Das, Zong Nguyen Sie-Mah and Mary Wright • May 11-23 • Opening reception May 11 (7-8pm)

OFFICIAL STUDIO GALLERY 9704-111 Ave (426-1111) • **ARTS**: Artworks by gallery artists and recent acquisitions, featuring photography by Ruud Van Empel • Until May 19

ELECTRIC DESIGN STUDIO AND GALLERY 9704-111 Ave (426-1111) • **ARTS**: Artworks by gallery artists and recent acquisitions, featuring photography by Ruud Van Empel • Until May 19

FAB GALLERY 9704-111 Ave (492-2081) • **Open Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 2-5pm • REACHING OUT WITH HOPE AND HEALING**: Artworks by Robert Pope, 1952-1992, May 16-June 9; opening reception: Thu, May 17 (6-10pm) • **Public lecture: The Life and Work of Robert Pope, Reaching Out with Hope and Healing** presented by William Pope; Thu, May 17 (noon) at Bernard Snell Hall, Walter Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre (U of A Hospital) and Thu, May 17 (5pm) at Fine Printworks by Kyra Fischer; May 16-June 9; opening reception: Thu, May 17 (6-10pm)

FRINGE GALLERY 10516 Whyte Ave (432-0240) • **Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-6pm • Recent artworks by Violet Owens** • Until May 30

GALLERY AT MILNER STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY Main Fl, Sir Winston Churchill Sq (496-7030) • **Open Mon-Fri 9am-9pm; Sat 9am-6pm; Sun 1-5pm • THE WRITTEN WORD**: Featuring works by the Edmonton Calligraphic Society • Until May 30, demonstrations on Sundays (1-4pm)

HARCOURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • **Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • FRONT ROOM: LITTLE MEN**: Shane Golby's constructed images were created out of anger in response to the gay marriage debate in Canada. They address issues of censorship, freedom of expression, gay identity, and the line between art and pornography; May 17-June 16 • **THE DRAG KING PROJECT**: Artworks by Toni Latour; May 17-June 16 • **Opening reception: Thu, May 17 (7-10pm)**, artist talk by Tony Latour • **in the Annex: DEAD INJUNS PART 2**: Performance by Jackson 2Bears; Sat, May 19 (7pm reception, 8pm show)

JEFF ALLEN GALLERY Strathcona Place, 10831 University Ave (433-5282) • **Open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm • BURST OF COLOUR**: Featuring pottery, woodwork, fabric art and paintings • Until May 31 • **Special opening** May 16 (6:30-8:30pm)

JOHNSON GALLERY (NORTH) 11817-80 St (479-8424) • **Open Tue-Fri 9:30am-5:30pm; Sat 9:30am-4pm • Serigraphs by Norval Morrisseau and Jackson Beardy**: prints by Toti, still life paintings by Cindy Revell, wall art by Raymond Chow; until May 31 • **(SOUTH)** 7711-85 St (465-6171) • **Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 10am-5pm • Artworks by Shirley Thomas, Edythe Markstad Buchanan**: Serigraphs of Edmonton buildings by George Webber, pottery by Jim Speers; until May 31

LOFT GALLERY AJ Ottewell Arts Centre, Red Barn, 590 Broadmoor Blvd, Sherwood Park (467-4481) • **Open Sat 10am-4pm; Thu 5-9pm • TIME FOR CHANGE**: Artworks by Jane Antoniouk, Karen Moir, Sonja Marinoske, Anne McCartney, Diana Sapara, and Lynda McAmmond

MCMULLEN GALLERY U of A Hospital, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • **Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm; Sat-Sun 1-8pm • A CONSERVATION PORTRAIT-NATURAL HABITATS AND SPECIES**: Multi-media artworks of the landscape, flora and fauna by Cindy Barratt and Elaine Funnell • Until May 27

MCPAG 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • **Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 10am-5pm; Sun 1-5pm • EXPOSURE**: Featuring the 2007 NAIT Photography Technology Grads artworks • Until May 19

UNITARIAN CHURCH 10804-119 St • **MY JOURNEY TO THE ISLAND**: Art show and sale • Fri, May 11 (4-9:30pm)

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Fl, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • **Open Mon-Fri 10am-4pm; Sat 12-4pm • CONSTELLATION**: Artworks by Emanuelle Bara; **ROOTS**: Artworks by Teresa Haikow; until May 12 • **MACBETH'S HORRIBLE IMAGININGS**: Artworks by Wade Stout; May 17-June 16; opening reception: Thu, May 17 (7-9:30pm)

GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

AGNES BUGERA GALLERY 12310 Jasper Ave (482-2854) • **Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • BACK AND FORTH**: Landscape paintings by Terry Fenton • Until May 17

ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL GALLERY 10215-106 St (488-6611) • **Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm (closed all hols) • Feature Gallery: BREW-HAHA**: Fun and fabulous teapots and tea-sets; until July 14 • **Discovery Gallery: THE NAKED TRUTH**: Artworks by Christopher Boha; until May 27

ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA Enterprise Square, 100, 10230 Jasper Ave • **Open Mon-Wed 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm (4-8pm free admission); Sat-Sun 11am-5pm • CHINA SENSATION**: New Art from Chengdu; until June 10 • **FLAT**: An exhibition featuring artworks by nine Edmonton artists; until May 27 • **UNFLAT**: David Cantine; until June 10 • **ART OUTDOORS**: featuring the ten original works of art that are featured in the *Art Outdoors* billboards; until May 27 • **BACK TO THE FUTURE**: Featured artworks by Franklin Carmichael, George Reid, AY Jackson, Tom Thomson, Frederick Varley, JEH Macdonald, Cornelius Krieghoff, Lawrence Harris, Ansel Adams, Maxwell Bates, Marion Nicoll, and many more; until June 10 • **Davey Thompson a hands-on workshop**; Sat, May 26 (1-4pm) • **Drop-In Tours**: Sat and Sun (12:30, 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30pm)

ART MODE GALLERY 12220 Jasper Ave (453-1555) • **Feel the Rhythm**: Eric Waugh's paintings involve music, motion, charcoal and colour, depicting scenes of fun and life • May 10-19

AVIATION AIR HANGAR 114 St, Kingsway Ave (718-7635/420-1757) • **NIGHT OF ARTISTS**: Featuring various artists artworks as well as The Mural Mosaic • **BRUSH STROKES**: Performance live art creation featuring Lewis Lavoie and musician Andy McCormack; Fri, May 11 (8:15pm) • May 11-13 • **Opening night art show party** Fri, May 11 (door \$pm) • \$25 (adv)/\$30 (door) includes appetizers and dancing to the Reggae beats of Soulja Fyah

MCPAG 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • **Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 10am-5pm; Sun 1-5pm • EXPOSURE**: Featuring the 2007 NAIT Photography Technology Grads artworks • Until May 19

Sat 10am-4pm; Sun 10am-6:30pm • CHROMATICITY: New paintings by Dennis Brown; until May 24 • **The Dining Room Gallery**: Artworks by Mary Pitny Doinchuk; until June 28

MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE CENTRE 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • **Open daily 11:30am-4pm • SASSY LADIES**: A display highlighting the "sassy" side of women including a revealing collection of intimates from the early years • Until May 28

NINA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS Stollery Gallery, 9704-111 Ave (474-7611) • **Open Mon, Wed, Fri 9:30am-2:30pm; Tue, Thu 6:30-4pm; 6-8pm • COME WHAT MAY 2007**: New artworks by Nina Haggerty studio artists • Until May 25 • **Opening reception**: May 24 (4-7pm)

ORTONA GALLERY 2nd Fl, 9722-102 St • **Open Sat and Sun 12-6pm or by appointment • STICKS AND STONES-MAKE MY BONES**: Mixed media artworks by Iva Janiga • Through May

PETER ROBERTSON GALLERY 10183-112 St (452-0286) • **Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm; Thu 10am-6pm • FLIGHT**: Recent figurative concrete and steel sculptures by Susan Owen Kagan • Until May 10

PICTURE THIS GALLERY 959 Ordze Rd, Sherwood Park (467-3038) • **MASTERPIECES IN MINIATURE**: Featuring of 40 artists artworks • Until May 24

THE PORTAL GALLERY 9414-91 St (702-7522) • **Open Mon-Wed 12-5pm; Thu-Fri 12-8pm; Sat 12-7pm • WARMTH**: Figurative and landscape paintings by Alberta artists • Until June 16

PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY 19 Perron Street, St Albert (460-4310) • **Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm, Thu 10am-8pm • HIGH ENERGY XII**: Artworks by students of St. Albert High school students • Until June 2

ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM 12845-102 Ave • **COOL AND COLLECTED**: See the unseen from the Museum's collections; until July 2 • **GALEN ROWELL-A RETROSPECTIVE**: Landscape photographs; until July 2 • **PROJECT RENEWAL**: A glimpse of the Museum's redevelopment plans; until July 2

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • **Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • COLOUR SPAIN**: Landscape paintings of Mojacar by Lynn Malin • May 12-29 • **Opening reception** Sat, May 12 (2-4pm), artist in attendance

SNAP GALLERY 10309-97 St (423-1492) • **Open Tue-Sat 12-5pm • INVENTIONS AND UNCOMMON PLACES**: Printworks by Jörg Rothenpiller • Until June 2

SPOT LIGHT GALLERY 107, 25 Chisholm Ave, St. Albert (419-2055) • **THE MONA LISA SHOW**: Featuring interpretations of the Mona Lisa to celebrate DaVinci's 555th birthday. Curated by Laura Watmough. Proceeds going to the Arts and Medicine Program at the Cross Cancer Institute • Until May 15

STUDIO 54 GALLERY 10831 University Ave (433-5282) • **Open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm • Wires on Wards**: We all have something to say, amateurs and professionals alike. Let this creative writing process guide you into self-discovery • Meetings bi-monthly, Sun (4-6pm) e-mail feelgoodbewellin2007@gmail.com for info

WHITEMUD CROSSING LIBRARY 4211-106 St (496-8357) • **Vivian Demuth reading from her novel Eyes of the Forest**: May 10 (7pm)

WORKSHOP WEST/NLT THIRD SPACE 11516-103 St • **Mouth Off: A Dramatic Monologue Writing Forum**: Presented by Alberta Playwrights' Network, the Writers Guild of Alberta and Workshop West Theatre. A panel discussion on writing dramatic monologues featuring Conn Massing, Mary Chan, and Allan Boss. Actors Beth Graham and Jared Matsunaga-Turnbull will perform a selection of monologues • Wed, May 16 (7:30pm) • Free

FROM CRADLE TO STAGE, THREE NEW ONE ACT PLAYS BY LOCAL PLAYWRIGHTS Walterdale Playhouse, 10322-83 Ave (439-2845) • **Three original one-act plays** • May 21-26 (Tuesday-Saturday 8pm, Sunday Matinees 2pm) • \$12-\$14 • **Tickets available at TIX on the Square**

GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES Mayfield Dinner Theatre (1-800-661-9804) • **A funny, classy, sexy musical with music by Julie Styne and lyrics by Leo Robin**, Lee, a gold-digging blonde bombshell, and her street-showgirl friend Dorothy Shaw, take a vacation cruise through Europe • Until June 24

GRANNY GHOST WHISPERER Jubilations Dinner Theatre, 8882-170 Street, WEM (484-2424) • Until June 2006) • **A series of readings by three female Alberta playwrights presented by Theatre of the New Heart** • **Boo! Boo!**: May 11; by Anna-Maria LeMaistre and Isabelle Rousseau starring Anna-Maria LeMaistre, Mireille Moquin, and Isabelle Rousseau • May 11 (8pm) • \$10 (each show)/\$25 (all 3 shows) available at the door

OLIVERI Citadel Shochet Theatre, 9828-101A Ave (425-1820) • **Musical by Lionel Bart, based on the story Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens** • Orphaned, and forced to live in a brutal workhouse, young Oliver wants more than the pitiful hand dealt him by fate. Sold to the local undertaker, he escapes into the seedy underworld of Victorian London where he falls in with a gang of child pickpockets • Until June 3 • **Tickets available at the Citadel Theatre box office**

GH SUSANNAI Varscona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (433-3399) • **The Euro-style variety spectacle hosted by national glamour gal Susanna Patchouli and her divine host Eros, God of Love** • Sat, May 26 (11pm) • **Tickets available at the door**

RIVERSIDE BAR AND GRILL 367 St. Albert Rd (460-5599) • **Open nightly 8pm, Fri 8pm and 10:30pm, Sat 10:30pm, Sun 8pm** • **Ron Vaudry, Welby Santos, Shawn Gramiak**; until May 13 • **Hit or Miss Mondays**: Mon, May 14 • **Alternative Comedy Night**; Tue, May 15 • **The Best in Local Talent**; Wed, May 16 • **Tony Rock, James Ball, Lars Callieou, and Rick Bronson**, May 17-20 • **Hit or Miss Mondays**: Mon, May 21 • **Alternative Comedy Night**, Tue, May 22 • **Kelly Taylor, Lars Callieou, and James Uloth**; May 23-27 • **Hit or Miss Mondays**: Mon, May 28 • **Alternative Comedy Night**; Tue, May 29 • **Joe Derosa, Mat Woycicki, Dan Bodribb, Rob Pue**; May 30-June 3

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THE COMIC STRIP 1646 Bourbon St, WEM, 8882-170 St (483-5999) • **Open nightly 8pm, Fri 8pm and 10:30pm, Sat 10:30pm, Sun 8pm** • **Ron Vaudry, Welby Santos, Shawn Gramiak**; until May 13 • **Hit or Miss Mondays**: Mon, May 14 • **Alternative Comedy Night**; Tue, May 15 • **The Best in Local Talent**; Wed, May 16 • **Tony Rock, James Ball, Lars Callieou, and Rick Bronson**, May 17-20 • **Hit or Miss Mondays**: Mon, May 21 • **Alternative Comedy Night**, Tue, May 22 • **Kelly Taylor, Lars Callieou, and James Uloth**; May 23-27 • **Hit or Miss Mondays**: Mon, May 28 • **Alternative Comedy Night**; Tue, May 29 • **Joe Derosa, Mat Woycicki, Dan Bodribb, Rob Pue**; May 30-June 3

Susan Zimmer *Author of I Love Coffee drops by to celebrate a common indulgence!*

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You'll sadly get Away From Her

JOSE BRAUN / joseb@vnewsworld.com

My favourite observation from unimpressively quotable critic Paul Thomas is that there's no effect more potent in movies than a man's face when it's changing its mind!

Away From Her, the feature writing and directing debut from actress Sarah Polley, is frequently at its most potent, most moving and most moving when it's precisely these moments that overwhelm the screen because their meaning remains obscure.

Traversing the hazy-fringed distances that grow between aging husband and wife Grant (Gordon Pinsent) and Fiona (Julie Christie) when the latter gradually succumbs to Alzheimer's, *Away From Her* uses a fragmented narrative, jumping forward and back in the couple's long life together, to evoke something of the fathomless shared history that seems to haunt every wayward step in both Fiona's disintegration and



DRAMA

OPENS FRI, MAY 11

AWAY FROM HERWRITTEN & DIRECTED BY SARAH POLLEY
STARRING JULIE CHRISTIE, GORDON PINSENT,
OLYMPIA DUKAKIS, MICHAEL MURPHY

Grant's heartbroken alienation as his beloved enters a care centre and retreats beneath a gauze of confusion and, just maybe, manipulation.

Working from a typically emotionally dense story by Alice Munro ("The Bear Came Over the Mountain"), Polley operates in terms utterly antithetical to the Hollywood affliction movie, focusing instead on ways to shape the uneasy coupling of overburdened consciousness and old love. The film's greatest resonance may come from the compelling enigma of Christie's performance and persona both, always profoundly charismatic while slightly out of reach.

But it's Pinsent's turn as the partner-turned-outsider that emerges as *Away From Her*'s most memorable performance, this cock-eyed bear of a man shifting uneasily from absorbing,



coping, not coping, admiring, despairing, marvelling, lost in a mystery that's unfolding right before his eyes. *Away*

From Her certainly shatters the notion that love becomes something simple and fixed as it enters what we some-

what perversely refer to as our golden years, but, impressively, there's a hint of consolation, too. □

Sarah Polley cracks into directing with stellar feature debut

JOSE BRAUN / joseb@vnewsworld.com

Well before her mid-20s Sarah Polley already shed her pre-teen child star guise and emerged with a list of decidedly adult directorial debuts sufficiently impressive to make actors twice her age weep. David Cronenberg, Michael Radford, Atom Egoyan, Hal Hartley, Wim Wenders. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that Polley would muster the confidence to make her feature debut as a writer/director at the advance of her 30s.

Polley spoke about *Away From Her* a few weeks prior to its theatrical release, though it's been circulating in festival circuits to much acclaim since premiering in Toronto last September. Based on Alice Munro's story "The Bear Came Over the Mountain," the film is distinguished by its remarkable sensitivity toward the intricacies of long-term relationships and the existential enigma of an individual's inextricable interior realm. "The way human beings change together," Polley explained, "the kind of adjustments you need to make to accommodate somebody else's perspective— I think that's probably what I'm most interested in looking at."

VUE WEEKLY: You first read "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" when you were 21. Did you already have ambitions to direct a feature back then?

FILM DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

SARAH POLLEY: No, though I'd been directing shorts at that point. I had no general ambitions to make features, but it was clear to me that this story would require that format if it were to be adapted. That's my approach to things generally, not having a big plan but just following things that mean something to me.

VW: Were you very conscious about how unusual it is for a young filmmaker to debut with a film about the elderly?

SP: I wasn't really aware of it until the film came out and people began responding to the fact that my age is so radically different from those of the characters. It was just a story I was immediately drawn to, with characters I really loved. It never really occurred to me that it was strange for a 28-year-old to be making it. I guess it's strange if you approach things with the idea of writing what you know, but perhaps I'm just more interested in telling stories about people I'm curious about.

VW: It must seem like everyone

emphasizes the film's unusual subject matter, but, when you think about it, the flawed nature of memory is one of the richest themes in movies.

SP: Memory is one of the things I'm most interested in, how it drives us, rules us, what memories we're untangling without knowing it. So to make a film about Alzheimer's is certainly an opportunity to explore all those ideas.

VW: There's a moment in *Away From Her* where Grant, directly echoing words from "The Bear Came Over the Mountain," describes his wife Fiona as "direct and vague," and "sweet and ironic." It struck me as an uncanny description of Julie Christie's screen presence, something as vivid in my memories of *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* or *Don't Look Now* as *Away From Her*.

SP: You know, it was when I hit that exact line in the story that I knew it could only be Julie. It's funny you picked up on that, because for me it describes her so eloquently, and on a personal level too, since at this point she was already a sort of friend. From that moment on there was nobody else who could possibly play the part.

VW: There's this distinctive, unnerving ambiguity to Christie's performances, and in *Away From Her* this ambiguity is utilized kind of terrifyingly, so that Grant's never entirely certain that there isn't a game being played, that

there isn't a perfectly lucid Fiona lingering behind the glassy gaze.

SP: It's funny with Julie. She's the kind of person where one moment she's so engaged with you and you feel like you have her all to yourself, and then the next moment you're kind of chasing her. I felt like that's Grant's relationship with Fiona, and there's no one else in the world that's ephemeral and magical. For me, Julie really embodied that.

VW: Were you able to draw a lot from your experiences as an actress when working with your actors?

SP: To an extent, but in a way it's difficult to use what you've learned as an actor when you're directing because you're working with such completely different actors who need completely different things. You have to kind of relearn the process for each actor, as opposed to taking what you know and throwing it on everybody.

VW: Did you find yourself learning more about acting while directing these very good actors?

SP: I did. I feel as a director you get special access to other people's processes, so there's a lot more you can learn from this perspective than when you're busy with your own work as an actor.

VW: I'm also curious about what you've gained from this as a writer. I

remember reading that you don't consider this adaptation "real writing."

SP: That's right. I mean, yes, I adapted it and found a way to put it on the screen, but it's a very faithful adaptation. I feel like this story was really born in Alice Munro's head, so for me this isn't just my vision. I definitely want to write original stuff as well, but screenplays are a tough thing. I think there can be an art to screenwriting, but at the same time I find it difficult to equate screenwriting with the writing of novels or journalism or anything where the writing stands alone, because ultimately a screenplay is a blueprint and not a final work.

VW: That makes me think of something Sam Fuller said. You know he wrote journalism and pulp novels before making films, and he felt that as a director he was really just "writing with the camera."

SP: That's very interesting, how one form becomes a natural extension of the other.

VW: Do you have an idea of what might be next for you as writer/director?

SP: Not a clear idea. I'm working on different things and seeing which takes root. One's original, one's an adaptation. They're both at such an early stage I don't think I have that much to say about them. Yet. □

All that glitters is not a *Golden Ball*

carolyne@vnewswEEKLY.com

Golden Ball (2006) 100 mins. French/Arabic

Gtom. Looked at one way, you could say that it's nothing more than a feel-good, follow-your-dreams film (and I don't mean that as pejorative as it sounds).

Be that as it may, though, it's one without many of the cliché trappings of what Hollywood offers up—everything from *The Pursuit of Happyness* to

Sure, our young protagonist Bandian (Aboubacar Sidiki Sumah) pursues his goal of becoming a soccer great with the utmost tenaciousness, and it will be by this tenaciousness that he'll lift himself above his circumstances. Yet his success seems to have a darker side, as well.

Golden Ball begins in the small village of Makono, Guinea—in coastal West Africa—with the precocious 12-



DRAMA

SAT, MAY 12 - MON, MAY 14 (7 PM)

MAY 14 (7 PM)

GOLDEN BALL

DIRECTED BY CHEIK DOUKOURÉ

WRITTEN BY MARTIN BROSSOLLET,

DAVID CARAYAN, DOUKOURÉ

STARRING ABOUBACAR SIDIKI SUMAH,

AGNÈS SOREL, HABIB HAMMOUD

WORLD CINEMA

year-old Bandian. He is completely taken with soccer, and is quite talented at it. The first thing he must do, however, is save enough money from his part-time wood-carrying job to buy a real leather ball.

Taken with the boy and his fortitude, Dr Isabell "Aspirin" of Doctors without Borders finds him a good used one. The ball, however, turns out to be a bit of bad luck, when a badly placed kick of it starts a house fire, and Bandian flees the village and the wrath of his father.

In his travels to the capital Conakry, where his sister Fanta (Mariam Kaba) lives, he joins in on a soccer game, garnering the interest of Béchir Bithar (Habib Hammoud), a wealthy businessman.

Béchir is sure that Bandian will be a star on the field, so he enrolls him in a school run by Karim (Salif Keita—a former pro-soccer player). And from there, through some of Béchir's underhanded manouevres, Bandian gets the chance of a lifetime—a scholarship to a soccer school in France.

SUMAH SHINES AS the smart and affable Bandian. He's a lot like the young character of Peekay in *The Power of One*. Even as a young actor, he manages to find both the chutzpah of showboat-y Bandian and the quivering fear of a child afraid of the dark.

I was a little uncomfortable with a couple of aspects of the film, howev-



er—the fact that success for Bandian meant he had to leave not only his village, but also his continent, for instance. And the character of Dr Aspirin kind of epitomized the residues of colonization.

Perhaps there was some nuance there that I couldn't read in the subtitles, but when this white doctor gives Bandian the soccer ball—something that none of the black characters were able to do—I couldn't help but feel that the moment was more than a little patronizing. This is only underscored when the ball causes Bandian to leave his family at such a

young age, and she says, "If I had known the trouble the ball was going to cause ..."

But then, there is a little bit of a dark side to this film. While Bandian is a good boy, some of the people rooting for him are not, using bribery and the like to get him on the road to soccer fame.

While I liked this about the film, it was also what leaves me torn. Bandian doesn't know about the things people are doing on his behalf, but they, nonetheless sully his success.

Maybe I am more a product of Hollywood than I like to admit. ▀

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ESCAPE from SUBURBIA



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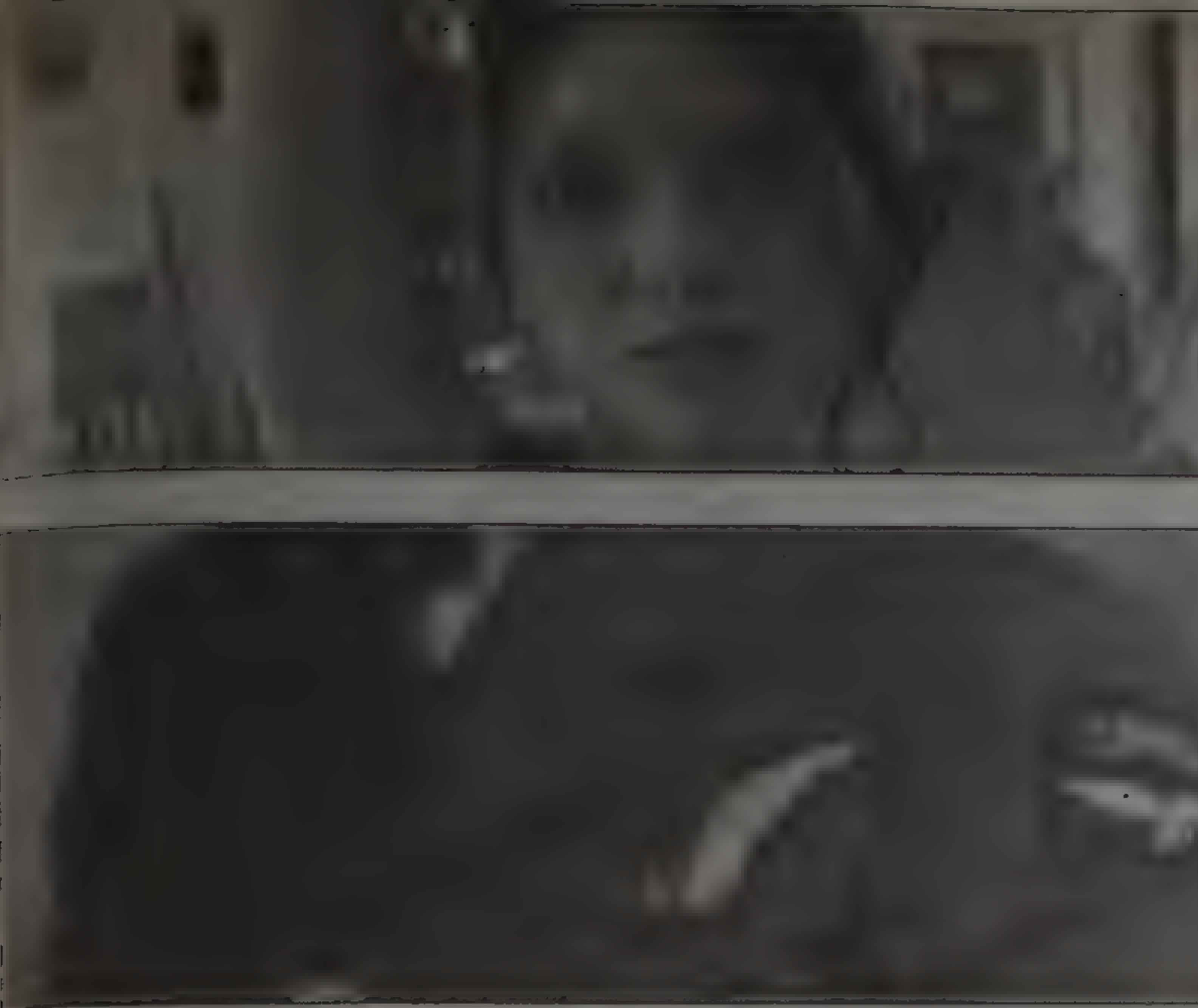
4:00pm

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VUEWEEKLY





After seeing his shorts, this director will Cross your mind a lot

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vneweekly.com

Of all of the abstract nouns out there, memory has to be one of the most elusive, always shifting shape, always molting and morphing even as it holds itself in focus. And because memory tends to be intensely personal, it is a near-endless fount of intrigue.

This truth floats through *The Short Films of Roy Cross* like a sheet that has freed itself from a clothesline on a windy day, alighting every once in a while to shroud an unsuspecting concrete noun—a person, a window, a mirror. On screen, his exploration into the phenomenon of memory plays out both fluidly and jarringly, but always with melancholy. There is always a yearning for what is no longer there, for what is remembered and for what will never be. Even the most sensual short, *I Like to Kiss*, seems to be tinged with longing, if only for the emotion it elicits from its watcher. As we spy in on the lustful couple, we bear witness to the beginnings of a potential rift between them. And the only laughter in any of the seven shorts (*Breeze*) is inspired by the play of a child. That isn't to say, however, that there are no beautiful surprises—for even his most meditative pieces

get multiple meanings.

Not surprisingly, much of the melancholy grows out of longing for a lost love—either the one that got away or the one that would have never worked anyway. *Through the Looking Glass* both an overwhelming sadness and the tippy-turvy mind-fuck of broken hearts. She sits in her window seat, day after day drinking pots of tea, seemingly waiting for that familiar face to come out of the photograph she props up in front of her, the voice uttering those two words of lovers. He stands in the streets, driving. The camera captures him in sweeping vertical circles, first going down his body and then up, and our ears recoil at the industrial soundtrack, the lack of connection

SHORTS

FRI, MAY 11 (7 PM); SAT, MAY 12 (9 PM)
BETTER MEMORY THROUGH CHEMISTRY: THE SHORT FILMS OF ROY CROSS
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY ROY CROSS
METRO CINEMA, \$10

in communication.

CROSS ALSO SHOWS us that this emotion might be personal, but it isn't unique. *A Portrait in a Letter: Somewhere in England* is a beautiful little piece culled from archived letters of Second World War soldiers who'd been injured and were in a military hospital in 1942. As Cross's camera plays among letters, focusing in on handwriting and postmarks, we hear the narrator read a letter written by Ken Liddell on John Broughton's behalf. The letter is to Johnny's doctor, the doctor who'd reformed Johnny's face after it was terribly burned. But then the images change to poppy buds and flowers, the narration moves to subtitles and the letter we're in on is to Johnny's girlfriend Lucy. While the form of *Portrait* is quite similar to the other shorts, it seems something of a departure in its lucidity. Most of the other pieces are much more contemplative.

One that seems to marry introspection with more linear narrative is deeply personal *Ranymede to New York*. Broken into chapters, a series of memories form a portrait of the film's narrator. From playing ball as an 11-year-old to a follow-your-heart trip to the Big Apple, we get trapped in his propensity to look backwards, to look into the past. Some telling footage plays out as the camera focuses on the car's side-view mirror. He is constantly aware of where he has come from, to the point of letting the mirror take up most of the frame. And we're reminded that like the warning on many side-view mirrors, the objects of memory may be closer than they appear. ▀



BETTER MEMORY THROUGH CHEMISTRY: THE SHORT FILMS OF ROY CROSS

"The Ex" has the off-the-wall go-for-broke zaniness of "Flirting With Disaster". Inspired!

-Scott Foundas, LA WEEKLY

the EX

DRAFF PEET BATEMAN

PG

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You saw *The End*. Now it's time for *The Escape from Suburbia*

One of my teachers once had each of us draw our world on a piece of paper. On it, we were to put where we lived in the centre.

The places we went regularly—say, grocery stores, banks, work, school—were also to find a spot on the page. If we could get to it on our own steam by walking or biking, we could put them in our "inner circle." If we took public transit, they'd go in our "middle circle." And if we had to drive there, then they'd be placed in the "outer circle."

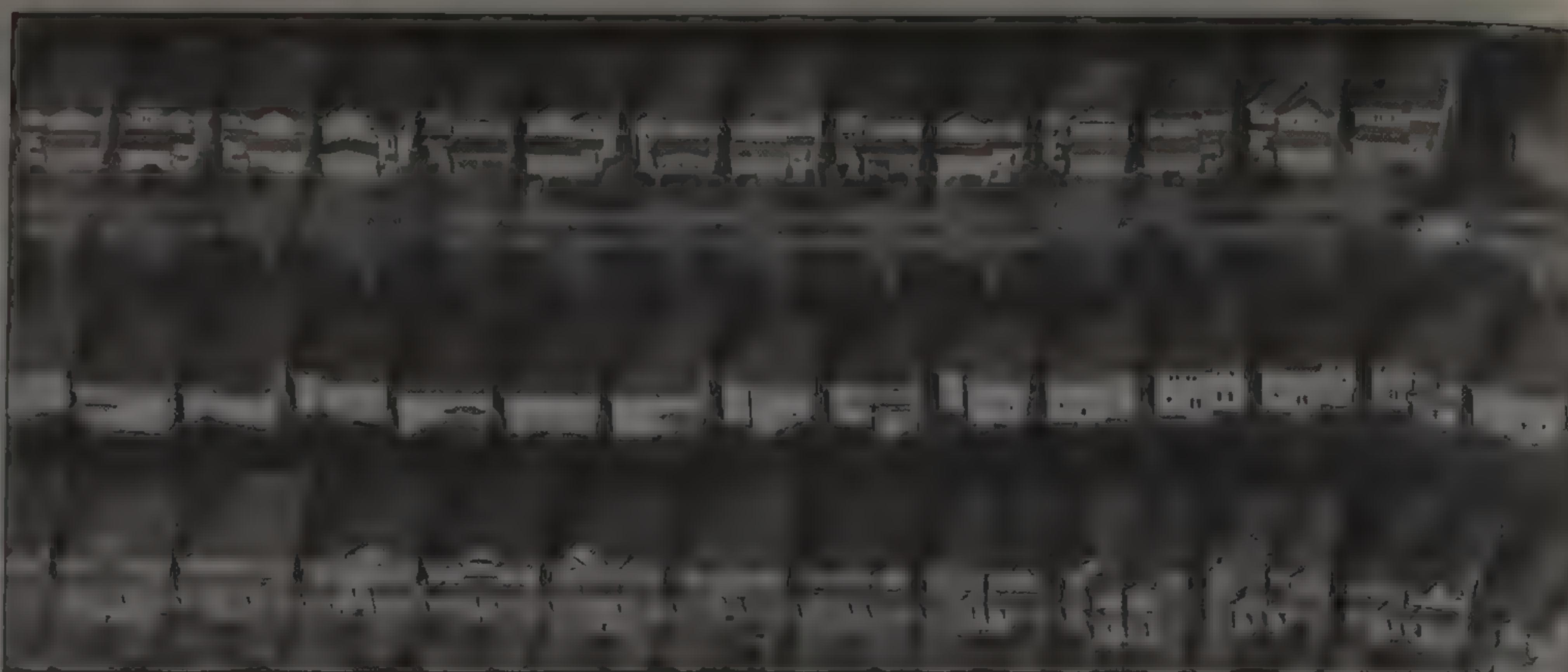
Looking around the class at each of our sheets, it was telling that most of us had to get into our car for the simplest of functions, like running out for a quick loaf of bread. Some of us couldn't take care of *any* of our daily responsibilities without a vehicle.



THE MAY 18, 2007, MAY 18 (7 P.M.)
ESCAPE FROM SUBURBIA
WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY GREGORY GREENE
METRO CINEMA \$10-\$17

Now, if you've seen *The End of Suburbia*, or one of the other Peak Oil docs, you know how unsustainable that lifestyle is. Gregory Greene's documentary is an eye-opener, and he proposes to open our eyes even wider with his highly anticipated follow-up, *Escape from Suburbia*.

Picking up where he left off, Greene again offers us a compelling and sobering look at the spectre of the end of the Oil Age. He uncovers some of the stories that show us that oil production is not only in decline but also the effects that are beginning to manifest in the lives of ordinary people.



LIKE ITS PREDECESSOR, *Escape from Suburbia* isn't exactly a feel-good film. Greene takes the subject very seriously,

examining it from many of the same angles and with many of the same interviewees.

But in *Escape*, we're offered a little

bit of respite in the peaks Greene offers of some of the ways people are

CONTINUES ON PAGE 42

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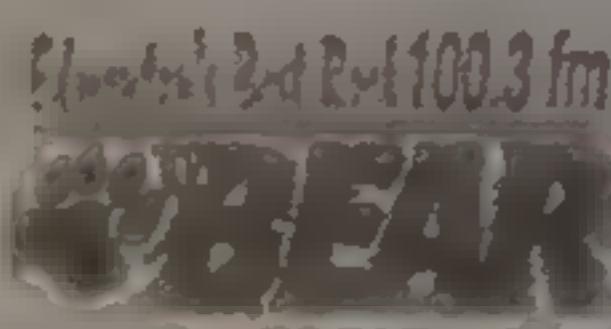
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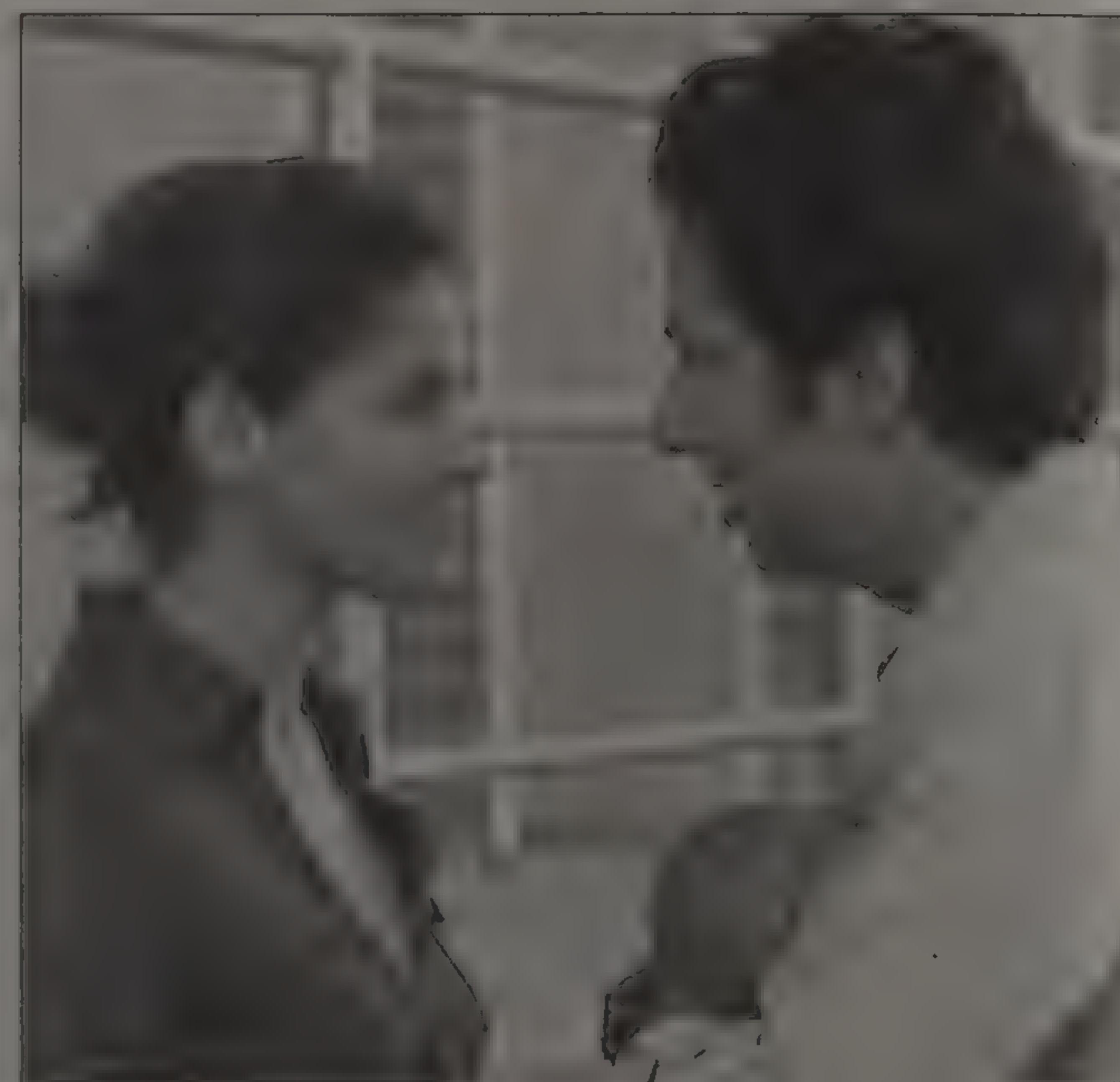
JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vneweekly.com
The opening of *The Ex* finds Tom (Zach Braff) and Sofia (Amanda Peet) snuggly, very pregnant and abuzz with domestic bliss. They discuss baby names with a cutesy formality that's heavy on the exposition and far more akin to TV chatter than actual conversation.

This is followed by a somewhat satisfying if equally contrived take-this-job-and-shove-it scene at Tom's workplace. Chef Tom works under a racist tyrant, whom he heroically swathes in some anonymous haute goo in defence of his abused fellow underlings. The scene's designed as a quick way to make us like Tom: his claim to our sympathies hinges on his being a slacker, but one unafraid to call bullshit on the obvious baddies.

Eventually baby, unemployment and New York rents drive Tom and Sofia to starting a new life in the sprawling blandness of Ohio, where Tom accepts a job at his father-in-law's advertising agency, a grotesque sort of Pee Wee's Playhouse for adults.

Tom's mentor is Chip, the agency's superstar and, as it happens, a high-school lover of Sofia's. We know right off that Chip's a total asshole because he wears an ascot (and perhaps because he's played by Jason Bateman), but the twist is that he's also confined to a wheelchair, making Tom look like the real putz when he starts accusing Chip of elaborately sabotaging his life.

IT'S TOUGH TO SEE how something like *The Ex*, so nakedly crowd-pleasing, expects to make any waves at the summer box office: *Spider-Man 3* may not be a masterpiece, but it's a spec-



COMEDY
OPENS, FRI, MAY 11
THE EX
WRITTEN BY DAVID GUION, MICHAEL HANDELMAN
STARRING ZACH BRAFF, AMANDA PEET

tacular alternative to staying in, while *The Ex* feels overwhelmingly like a sitcom expanded to 90 minutes. There's not a hint of sweep, emotional highs or showmanship here—which is to say there's not much of a movie.

There are, of course, funny bits. A gratingly New Agey mom (Amy Adams, clearly getting zero mileage for her recent and deserving Oscar nod) makes two babies "hug." There's this kid who can shove an entire god-

damned burger in his mouth and swallow it whole. (Okay, maybe there is a bit of showmanship.) But these highlights hardly sustain something like interest in Tom's cartoonish dilemma.

In fact, *The Ex* is kind of depressing for the avid moviegoer. Charles Grodin fans will certainly despair that this is the movie he came out of a 12-year retirement for, while Mia Farrow's admirers may start wondering if she and Woody can't patch things up and get her cast in something remotely in league with her talents.

Braff, meanwhile, keeps trying to be the new John Ritter sans slapstick. Come to think of it, I really miss John Ritter. ▀

Just like its wayward soldiers, *Delta Farce* misses the mark

ROBBIE YANISH / christine@vneweekly.com

Although appealing to maybe a few Southern states, *Delta Farce* is a named its '80s for screwball misfits of the day only by screwing up really first.

When Army reservist Larry (Larry the Cable Guy) manages to get dumped by his girlfriend and lose his job on the same day, he decides, with the help of his loser friends and fellow reservists Bill (Bill Engvall), and Everett (DJ Qualls), to spend the weekend drinking, visiting Hooters and using his ex's stuff for target practice. Being weekend warriors, however, they mistakenly get called up for duty instead by tough drillmaster Sergeant Kilglove (Keith David).

And the mistakes continue, with their flight to Fallujah, Iraq ending up in Mexico. Being idiots, though, they

COMEDY

OPENS FRI, MAY 11
DELTA FARCE
DIRECTED BY CB HARDING
WRITTEN BY BEAR ADERHOLD, TOM SULLIVAN
STARRING LARRY THE CABLE GUY, BILL ENGVALL,
DJ QUALLS

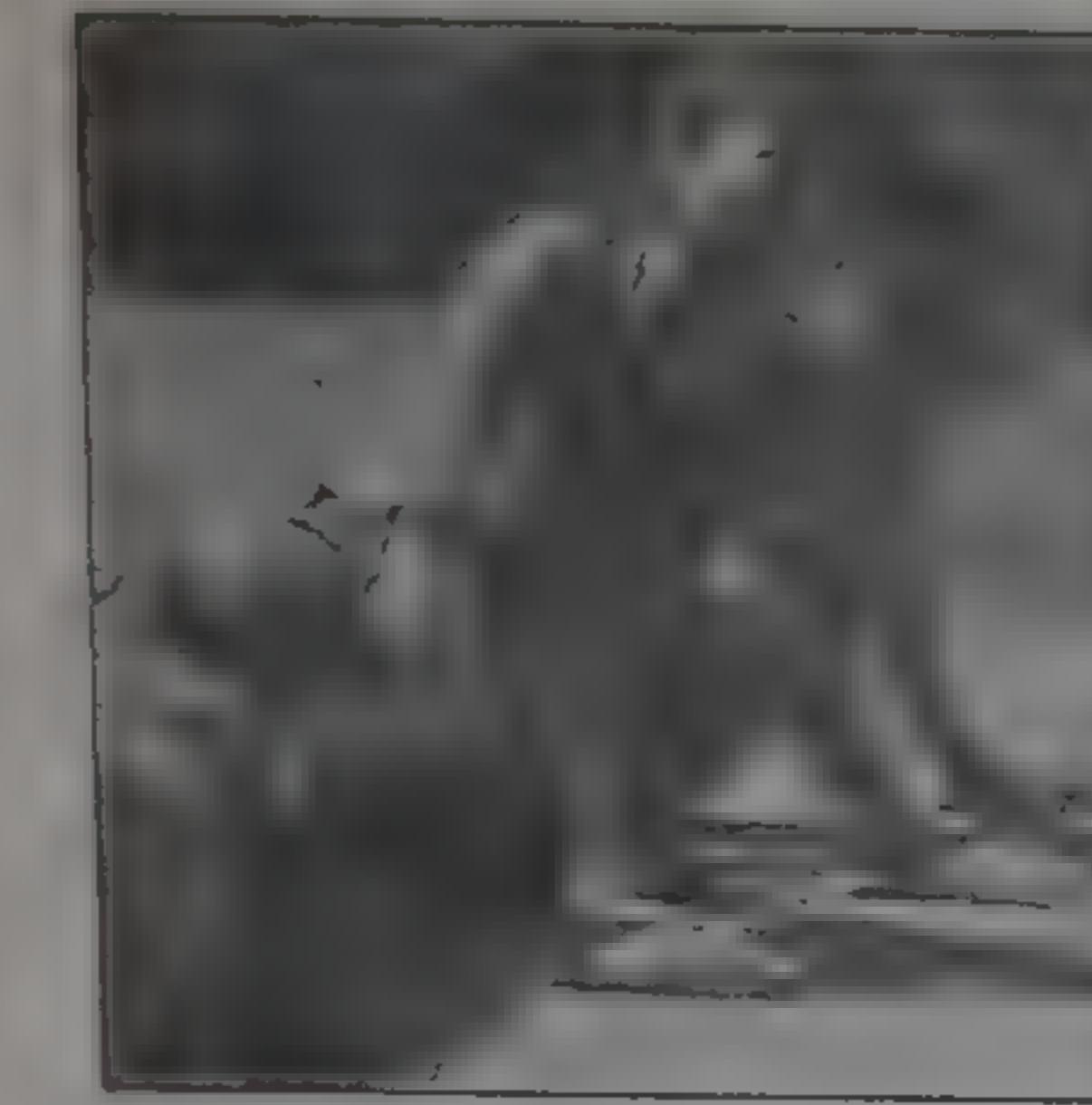
think they're in Iraq and end up engaging the local banditos in combat. This helps the townfolk besieged by these vermin for years. Eternally grateful, the mayor's daughter Maria (Marisol Nichols) falls for Larry but the danger is far from over.

There are so many chances for this movie to be funnier, but the gags fall flat. I kept sitting at the edge of my seat rooting for a hilarious punchline to redeem the bad blue-collar redneck puns. Even the trademark Cable Guy catchphrases seemed forced on us. At one point Larry, trussed up like Rambo on speed, yells out "Git'r Done!" I swear I heard crickets chirp-

ing in the theatre.

Is this all we get from the king of The Blue Comedy Tour? Well, yes—for two reasons. First, the man works cheap. His last film only cost \$4 million to make, virtually guaranteeing it to make money if his fans from the tour are willing to sit through anything on the off-chance they'll hear the cornhusker's best lines. And second, as long as the marketing budget is held to a respectable level, movies like this can be decent moneymakers as long as there is some decent directing.

CB HARDING, a photographer-turned-award-winning-ad-exec-turned-director squeaks by on this one. He's a competent reality show director, turning out the groundbreaking *Making the Band* and *The Osbournes*, but the leap to the big screen can be tricky. It was obvious that he's not sure how to film close-ups for the larger format as



his head shots were overwhelmingly close and in your face. Intentional, maybe? I don't think so.

To be fair, there were a few mildly amusing scenes. Not laugh out loud, but I felt myself chuckle. They involved none of the main cast however.

Seeing a hulking Keith David in a red baby doll nightie and red lipstick

after being captured by some bored, gay locals when he gets lost in the desert was chuckle-worthy. The guy was fearless. Another scene involved a very gay bandito enamoured with the Sergeant. I had the feeling he had a blast playing the part.

On the other side of the comedy wheel was up-and-comer DJ Qualls. With *Road Trip*, *The Core*, *The New Guy* and several more credits to his belt, this was his first miss. Sporting leopard skin underwear and a cheesy pom moustache, this former waiflike Prada model was repulsive to watch. Prada model—now that's funny. Have you seen this guy? He makes Nicole Ritchie look chubby.

Rednecks rejoice and spend your hard-earned blue-collar money. The rest of us already saw this movie ages ago in *Stripes*, *In the Army Now* and *Police Academy*. Only back then the money was better spent. v

Spider-Man's web unravels in song and dance

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vneweekly.com

Spider-Man, Spider-Man ... for him, life is a great big bang up—when ever there's a hang up, you'll find the Spider-Man.

THIS SUCKS

BLOCKBUSTER

NOW PLAYING
SPIDER-MAN 3
DIRECTED BY SAM RAIMI
WRITTEN BY SAM RAIMI, IVAN RAIMI,
ALVIN SARTORIUS
STARRING TOBEY MAGUIRE, KIRSTEN DUNST,
JAMES FRANCO, THOMAS HADEN CHURCH,
TOPHER GRACE, JK SIMMONS

If only Sam Raimi and his *Spider-Man 3* co-conspirators had bothered to listen to the damn song a little closer (and why not—the Flaming Lips take a decent stab at it on the film's soundtrack, although I tend to prefer the Ramones' version ... but I digress ...). While they certainly seem to have caught that part about the "great big bang up," the makers of *Spider-Man 3* apparently didn't notice that the iconic theme makes no reference to crying, singing, dancing or the weaning of eyeliner.

Let me explain: like its (vastly superior) predecessors, *Spider-Man 3* features some truly breathtaking visual effects and exhilarating action sequences, (mostly) avoiding the sometimes-hokey look of many similarly CGI-heavy films. And like the previous two entries in the now-trilogy, *Spider-Man 3* relies on (and tragically underutilizes) actors JK Simmons and Bruce Campbell—playing newspaper editor J Jonah Jameson and a snooty maître d', respectively—for inspired comic relief.

However, in between the massive set-piece action sequences and genuinely hilarious laughs that are the

bread-and-butter of the franchise (and, well, every big summer blockbuster, really), audiences are forced to sit through seemingly endless weeping (seriously—I think every major character sheds tears at least once), a way-too-long dance montage (yup, a dance montage), some ridiculous emo-brooding from an eye-lined Tobey Maguire as Peter Parker (I guess it was included with his sexy new black suit) and not one but two songs from Kirsten Dunst's Mary Jane Watson.

AND ABOUT DUNST ... Maybe my opinion has been swayed by spending too much time reading Perez Hilton's blog—he refers to her as "the Drunkst"—but, man, is she tough to watch in this movie. When her relationship with Peter Parker hits the rocks halfway through the movie, you almost feel like screaming "just ditch her, Pete! Come on, man—trust your Spidey sense!" The fact that Mary Jane is dumped from a Broadway musical for being a bad actor and lousy singer in the film's first act hits a little close to home—had



Raimi done away with her at roughly the same point in the movie, she would not have been missed.

Not that Dunst is the only cast member whose performance verges on embarrassing. While Topher Grace is perfectly cocky and slimy as ambitious photographer Eddy Brock, as Brock's alter-ego Venom he is utterly ridiculous, all fake fangs and chewed scenery. Similarly, James Franco does a decent job as the conflicted and vengeful Harry Osborne, but once he throws on the body armour and hops on his jet-powered snowboard (ugh) to become the New Goblin, you can't help but feel a little bad for the guy.

The real heartbreaker, though, is not that *Spider-Man 3* is a horrifically

bad movie—it's mediocre at worst, to be entirely fair. No, *Spider-Man 3* is disappointing because of what came before it. The franchise's first film was easily the best superhero movie since the Jack Nicholson-Tim Burton-Michael Keaton *Batman*, and *Spider-Man 2* somewhat unbelievably bettered its predecessor.

In both, Raimi somehow created real emotional drama in between all the web slinging, creating films that, while still satisfying mainstream commercial blockbusters, also had a real and enduring warmth and soul. With *Spider-Man 3*, however, he's merely managed a sometimes entertaining, occasionally frustrating and entirely forgettable mess. v

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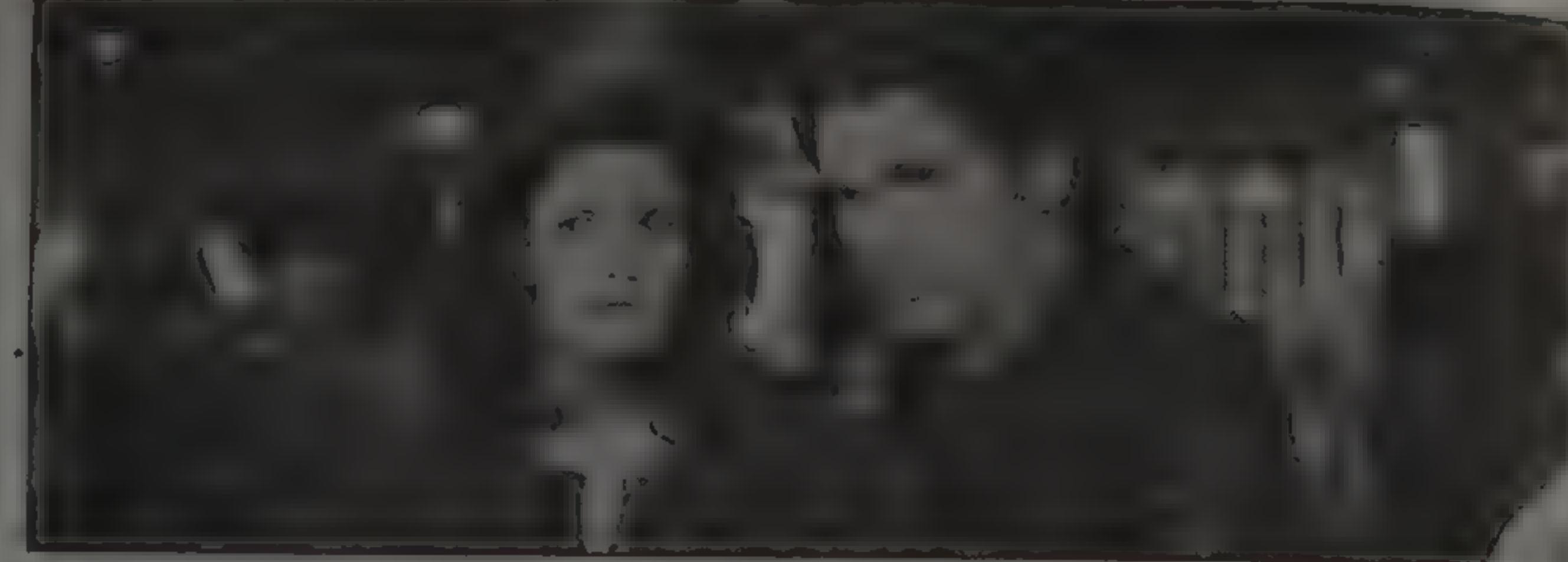
Lucky You needs a better poker face

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vneweekly.com

There was no hope for the underdog this past weekend; a lean stud in red and blue tights made sure of that. But Curtis Hanson's Vegas poker drama *Lucky You* maintains its confidence, like a grey-haired lady in a rainbow visor hat plunking down quarters at the slot machine in the corner. It's an endearing sight, but equally a test of my patience.

In the shadow of his superstar gambler dad, Huck Cheever (Eric Bana) is nonetheless a poker face to be reckoned with. As an all-or-nothing card shark, casino patrons are in constant competition with his ballsy reputation. But he suddenly goes weak in the knees for an aspiring club singer Billie (Drew Barrymore), despite her contempt for his compulsive gambling. It becomes Huck's ultimate goal to beat his father (Robert Duvall) in an international poker tournament, though he's caught in a web of honour and ego as he's baited by Billie's charms.

Lucky You is a see-saw of family romance and fetishistic card table action, with Huck and his Oedipal self-discovery at the heart. The poker stuff is kind of fun, even though I had little idea of what was really happening. But it's quite alright if you're as dense as I am, as the film foregrounds the character drama as part of it; it's as much a play of emotions as it is of suits.



MOVIES
LUCKY YOU
DIRECTED BY CURTIS HANSON
WRITTEN BY HANSON, ERIC ROTH
STARRING DREW BARRYMORE, ERIC BANA,
ROBERT DUVALL

MOST OFTEN, I can't stomach Barrymore, particularly because I think she's a bad actress. But in my predisposition, I forgot about Hanson's remarkable ability to set the scene for his actors; in *LA Confidential*, the sophisticated pacing and luxurious

scenery drew marvelous performances from its ensemble, and even helped Kim Basinger win an Oscar. And for that oversight, I am a rude, thoughtless little pig, as Barrymore, as a stunning brunette, is probably most charming spectacle of the film.

At first, in all her Vegas ignorance, Billie hovers around Huck as he shows her the ropes of poker. She asks all of the questions the audience might ask, providing an underhanded Pop-Up Video-style guide to the card table

sequences. Then, as the film is drawn further into the void of father-son conflict, Billie becomes a most welcome voice of moral authority amongst all the cock-wagging. And while she may not wear the pants, she nonetheless wears some fabulous little outfits, adding to *Lucky You*'s well-pronounced Vegas decadence that sustains itself without upstaging the whole effect.

Ultimately though, *Lucky You* is pretty flat. Bana's far from an impressive lead, and the exhausting poker scenes stretch the film out almost to the length of a Bollywood sports musical. At times it feels no different from live poker broadcasts on TSN. It's one quiet staredown after another (at one point I swear I could hear the Hobgoblin cackling in the adjacent theatre).

But if you're like the five or six people I saw withhold from all the webslinging, you might give *Firestarter* and the *Incredible Hulk* a chance to teach you a couple tricks about the game of poker, and maybe the human heart as well. □

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ESCAPE FROM SUBURBIA

BY JEFFREY FALK

facing the challenges of Peak Oil through a growing global movement of citizen's groups. The idea is that we need to start looking creatively at suburbia and transforming it into a sustainable system.

That said, however, Greene also lays out some of the future energy options that a lot of people are optimistically talking about with some healthy skepticism. The reality is that we're going through something like 84 million barrels of oil a day, and a growing number of people believe that the alternative fuels we have, even combined, will not allow us to continue in the lifestyle we've become accustomed to. As one of the interviewees says, "no combination of alternative fuels we have is going to allow us to run Walt Disney

World, Wal-Mart and the Interstate Highway system."

Now, I'll admit that in that classroom exercise I did a few years ago, I got a little proud of my own way of life—there was nothing I did in my daily life that required a car. I could walk or bike to all of my regular spots. But that feeling of self-righteousness was pretty short lived.

When we talk about a looming oil shortage, some of us will sputter about the big trucks and SUVs that populate our roads and how wasteful they are. But it always takes some time before we realize how screwed we all are without oil—regardless of whether we drive or not.

As *Escape from Suburbia* points out what is a city without all of the things that are driven into it everyday? Tractor trailers all over the continent are busy bringing in our supplies—most notably food.

Now there's a thought. □

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THE CANADIAN WEEKLY FILM GUIDE

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CHABA THEATRE-JASPER

6094 Connaught Dr. Jasper
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SPIDERMAN 3 (PG, frightening scenes, not suitable for younger children) Fri-Sat 6:50, 9:25; Sun-Thu 8:00; Sat-Sun 1:30

DISTURBIA (14A) Fri-Sat 9:05; Sun-Thu 8:00

CINEMA CITY 12/ MOVIES 12

Cinema 12: 3633-99 St.
463-5481

TMNT (PG) Sat-Sun 11:00; Daily 1:10, 3:05, 5:15, 7:20, 9:35; late night show 11:45; Kids Cabin Fever 1:10

THE LOOKOUT (14A, coarse language) Sat-Sun 11:35; Daily 2:00, 4:30, 7:25, 9:50; late night show 12:00

THE HOAX (14A, coarse language) Sat-Sun 11:05; Daily 1:35, 4:05, 7:00, 9:30; late night show 11:55

PREMONITION (PG, frightening scenes not recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:40; Daily 2:05, 4:20, 7:40, 10:05; late night show 12:15

THE LAST MIMZY (PG, may frighten younger children) Sat-Sun 11:25; Daily 1:40, 4:15, 7:10, 9:25; late night show 11:40

SHARKWATER (PG, disturbing content) Sat-Sun 11:30; Daily 1:15, 3:10, 5:05, 7:50, 10:15; late night show 12:20

THE REAPING (14A, frightening scenes) Sat-Sun 11:45; Daily 2:10, 4:35, 7:15, 9:20; late night show 11:25

GHOST RIDER (14A) Sat-Sun 11:15; Daily 1:55, 4:25, 6:55, 9:15; late night show 11:35

MUSIC AND LYRICS (PG) Sat-Sun 11:10; Daily 1:30, 4:00, 7:05, 9:40; late night show 12:10

BECAUSE I SAID SO (14A) Sat-Sun 11:05; Daily 1:50, 5:10, 7:45, 10:00; late night show 12:10

ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES (G) Sat-Sun 11:50; Daily 2:20, 4:50, 7:30, 9:45; late night show 11:50

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (PG, not recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:20, Daily 1:45, 5:00, 7:35, 9:55; late night show 12:05

Movies 12: 130 Ave 50 St. 472-9779

TMNT (PG) Sat-Sun 11:05; Daily 1:10, 3:10, 5:05, 7:10, 9:15; Fri-Sat late show 11:35; Kids Cabin Fever 1:10

PREMONITION (PG, frightening scenes not recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:20; Daily 1:40, 4:35, 7:20, 9:40; Fri-Sat late show 12:00

THE LOOKOUT (14A, coarse language) Sat-Sun 11:40; Daily 2:10, 4:25, 6:50, 9:10; Fri-Sat late show 11:20

THE HOAX (14A, coarse language) Sat-Sun 11:10; Daily 1:35, 4:20, 6:55, 9:35; Fri-Sat late show 11:50

THE LAST MIMZY (PG, may frighten younger children) Sat-Sun 11:15; Daily 2:00, 4:10, 7:00, 9:25; Fri-Sat late show 11:25

THE REAPING (14A, frightening scenes) Sat-Sun 10:50; Daily 1:25, 4:15, 7:15, 9:45; Fri-Sat late show 12:05

GHOST RIDER (14A) Sat-Sun 11:00; Daily 1:30, 4:30, 7:05, 9:30; Fri-Sat late show 12:00

ZODIAC (14A, violence) Daily 1:15, 4:25, 7:40, Fri-Sat late show 11:10

THE NUMBER 23 (14A, violence, gory scenes) Sat-Sun 11:25; Daily 1:55, 4:50, 7:25, 9:45; Fri-Sat late show 12:10

ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES (G) Sat-Sun 11:35; Daily 2:05, 4:55, 7:15, 9:20; Fri-Sat late show 11:30

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (PG, not recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:30; Daily 1:45, 4:40, 7:30, 9:50; Fri-Sat late show 11:55

CITY CENTRE 8

10200-102 Ave. 421-7020

SPIDER-MAN 3 (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) no passes Fri-Sun 12:00, 12:30, 3:10, 3:40, 6:30, 7:00,

9:30, 10:00; Mon-Thu 12:00, 12:30, 3:10, 3:40, 6:30, 7:00, 9:30, 10:00

LUCKY YOU (PG, coarse language) Daily 12:10, 3:00, 6:40

CIVIC DUTY (14A) Daily 9:25

GEORGIA RULE (14A, mature themes, sexual content) Daily 12:20, 3:20, 6:50, 9:40

FRACTURE (14A) Fri-Sat Mon-Thu 12:50, 4:20, 6:45, 9:20; Sun 4:20, 8:45, 9:20

NEXT (14A) Fri-Sun Tue-Thu 1:10, 4:10, 7:40, 10:10; Mon 1:10, 4:10, 10:10

28 WEEKS LATER (18A, gory scenes) Daily 1:00, 3:50, 7:10, 9:50

HOT FUZZ (14A, gory scenes, coarse language) Daily 12:40, 3:30, 7:20, 10:10

THE EX (PG, coarse language, not recommended for children) Daily 1:20, 4:00, 7:30, 10:10

WAITRESS (PG, sexual content, mature themes) sneak preview Sun 2:00

CLAREVIEW 10

4211-139 Ave.
472-7600

NEXT (14A) Fri-Sun 1:00, 3:20, 6:40, 9:00; Mon-Wed 3:20, 6:40, 9:00; Thu 3:20, 6:40

DISTURBIA (14A) Fri-Sun 1:20, 3:30, 7:10, 9:45; Mon-Thu 3:30, 7:10, 9:45

HOT FUZZ (14A, gory scenes, coarse language) Daily 9:20

LUCKY YOU (PG, coarse language) Fri-Sun 1:50, 4:20, 6:50; Mon-Thu 4:20, 6:50

THE EX (PG, coarse language, not recommended for children) Fri-Sun 1:40, 4:10, 7:15, 9:10; Mon-Thu 4:10, 7:15, 9:10

28 WEEKS LATER (18A, gory scenes) Fri-Sun 1:30, 4:00, 7:30, 9:40; Mon-Thu 4:00, 7:30, 9:40

GEORGIA RULE (14A, mature themes, sexual content) Fri-Sun 1:10, 3:50, 7:20, 9:50; Mon-Thu 3:50, 7:20, 9:50

SPIDER-MAN 3 (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) no passes Fri-Sun 12:00, 12:30, 1:30, 3:15, 3:45, 4:45, 6:30, 7:00, 8:30, 10:00; Mon-Thu 3:15, 4:45, 6:30, 7:00, 8:30, 10:00

HOT FUZZ (14A, Gory Scenes, Coarse Language) Daily 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45

SPIDER-MAN 3 (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:00; Daily 1:35, 4:10, 6:50, 9:25

MEET THE ROBINSONS (G) Sat-Sun 11:05, Daily 1:15, 3:15, 5:10, 7:15

FRACTURE (14A) Daily 9:15

DISTURBIA (14A) Daily 1:10, 3:10, 5:25, 7:35, 10:10

BLADES OF GLORY (PG, Crude Content, Not Recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:25; Daily 1:30, 3:25, 5:20, 7:25, 9:35

HOT FUZZ (14A, Gory Scenes, Coarse Language) Daily 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:45

SPIDER-MAN 3 (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Sat-Sun 11:00; Daily 1:35, 4:10, 6:50, 9:25

MEET THE ROBINSONS (G) Sat-Sun 11:05, Daily 1:15, 3:15, 5:10, 7:15

WILD HOGS (PG, coarse language, not recommended for young children) Daily 9:00

DISTURBIA (14A) Daily 9:25; Sat-Sun 3:25

GEORGIA RULE (14A, mature themes, sexual content) Daily 6:55, 9:20; Sat-Sun 12:55, 3:20

MEET THE ROBINSONS (G) Daily 7:00; Sat-Sun 12:55, 3:20

WILD HOGS (PG, coarse language) Daily 9:00

SPIDER-MAN 3 (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) no passes Fri-Sun 11:30, 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sun 11:30, 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Mon-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Fri 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sat 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sun 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Mon-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Fri 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sat 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sun 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Mon-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Fri 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sat 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sun 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Mon-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Fri 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sat 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sun 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Mon-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Fri 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sat 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sun 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Mon-Thu 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Fri 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sat 12:00, 1:00, 1:30, 3:00, 3:45, 4:30, 5:30, 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:00, 10:30, 11:30; Sun 12:00, 1:00

... and then the guards poked McCuaig in the bagpipes

They didn't know what to make of us in Mexico," says McCuaig's lead vocalist and bagpiper Johnny McCuaig, with a laugh. "The guys at the border kept poking at my bagpipes and giving me strange looks, until I played a couple of songs to convince them that the bagpipes really are a musical instrument."

That might just be a theme for McCuaig—convincing people, that is. First he had to convince his previous band that the bagpipes worked with rock music. (The members of the current band—guitarist Curt Besette, bassist Darwin Reddekopp and drummer Curt Romanick—embraced the bend-bagpipe-notes-to-a-rock-band concept right away and have been together for eight years.)

Then there are the audiences that expect a traditional maritime/Celtic sound from McCuaig. The band members say that it's as if audiences enter with their eyes: they see Johnny on stage in his kilt, and already have their minds made up that the bagpipes and rock don't mix.

"Then there's this transition," says Romanick, "where you can see that they're working out in their heads what's working. We win them over."

And, sometimes the musicians can have to convince themselves that they deserve the attention they've garnered, and the following year built first in Canada and now Mexico, where they jammed with trumpet player Luis Gasca of Santana and Janis Joplin fame.

THAT'S WHERE *Vita*, their fifth album, comes in. Band members feel it's a more mature offering for their fans. They've grown together as a group, not just as musicians but as friends,



PREVIEW

SAT, MAY 12 (9 PM)
McCUAIG
WITH FUNKAFELLYA
ON THE ROCKS, \$10

and they took more time in creating this CD.

"It's a reflection of where we've been, events we've all been through," McCuaig says, Romanick vocally agreeing.

For example, "Neverland" is a true story, although the bandmates are hesitant to divulge all of the facts

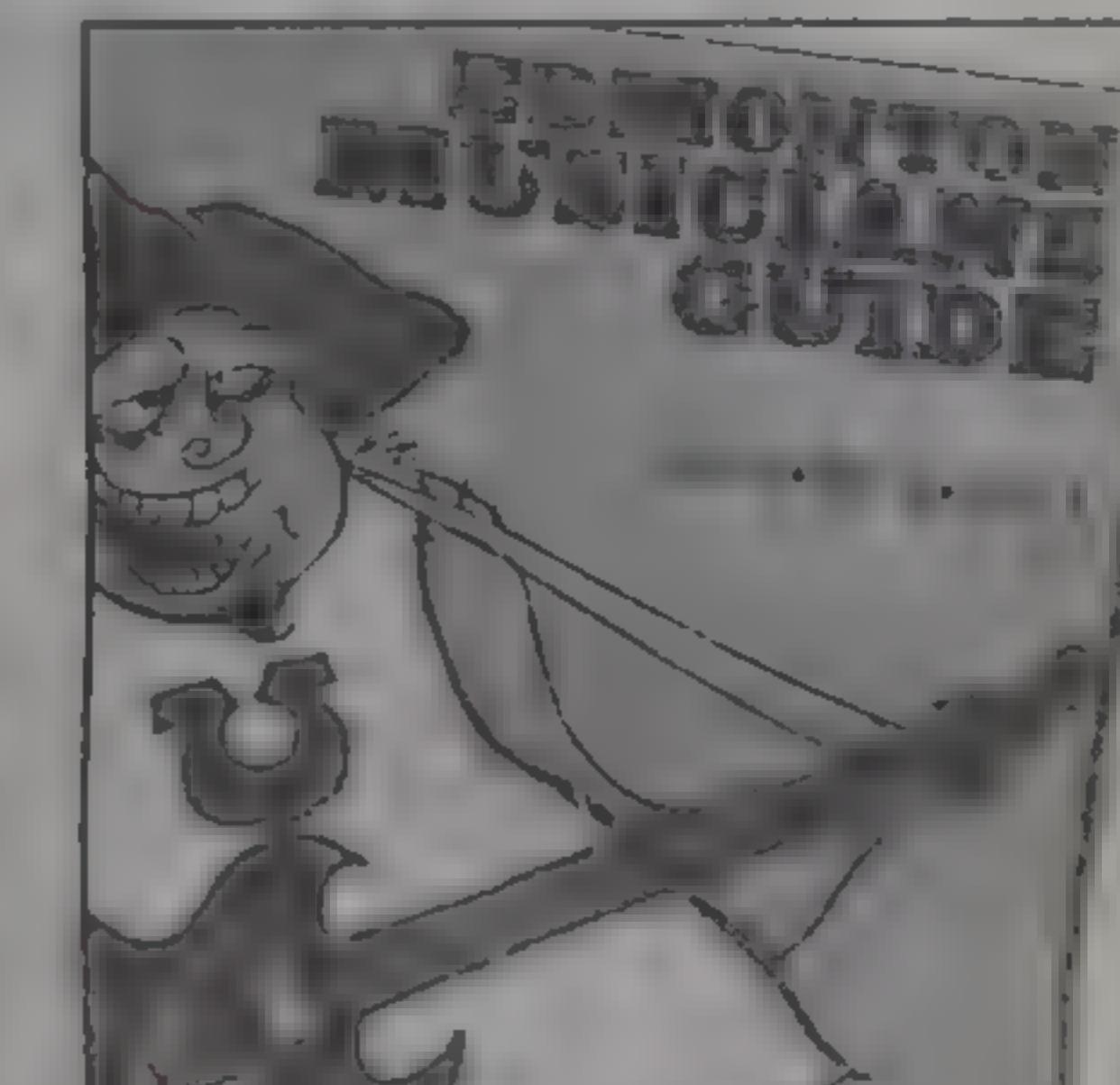
regarding the song's writing.

"Let's leave it at that," McCuaig jokes. "Those who are real close to us will recognize it and those who don't—well, it will keep them guessing."

In the end, the band may have outlasted the skeptics who labelled it as a novelty that wouldn't last, but McCuaig says that he never concerned himself with them much in the first place. "They never knew what they were talking about," he says. "We don't worry about convincing them." □



PREVIEW / SAT, MAY 12 (9 PM) / COPILOTS / EDDIE SHORTS Vancouver's Copilots indulge in a welcome combination of tightly structured songs—it's not that there's no space in them, but rather that there are no wasted notes—and the urgency that arises when a group explores its sonic canvas without fear. This is a rock band at heart, for sure, with vocals that drag and stretch against the grain, but the melodies are, well, a little poppy—in a good way—and the musicians don't bury their chords beneath a wall of distortion. Instead, the guitars on songs like "Atavistic" and "As You Are" are brushed with a touch of grunginess, but not so much that notes and melodies are sacrificed. Surprises abound in the construction of the songs, too; the airy pop of "In the Way" rolls into some glimpses of freak-out jazz riffing, with trumpet courtesy of JP Carter—who himself just happens to be performing in Edmonton with his duo Carsick over at the Yardbird Suite on May 11—right before it slips into a smooth melody that carries the song to its conclusion. Copilots is that too rare type of band that knows the way around an instrument, but can also compose an engaging song without sounding like the music is being over-thought. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vnewsworld.com



OH SUSANNA LIVE
Friday May 11th
The Velvet Underground
Performing songs
from her new record
Short Stories

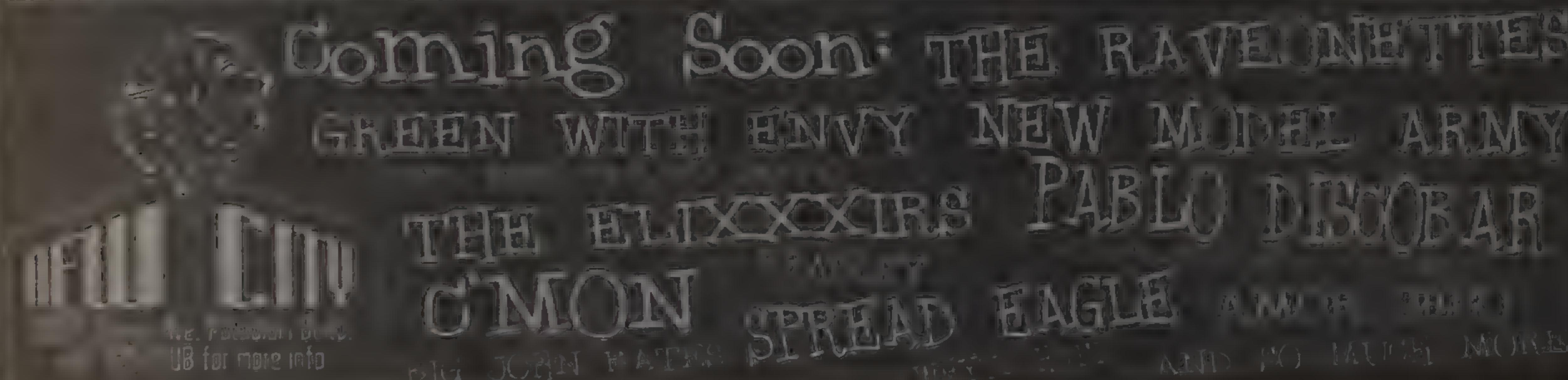
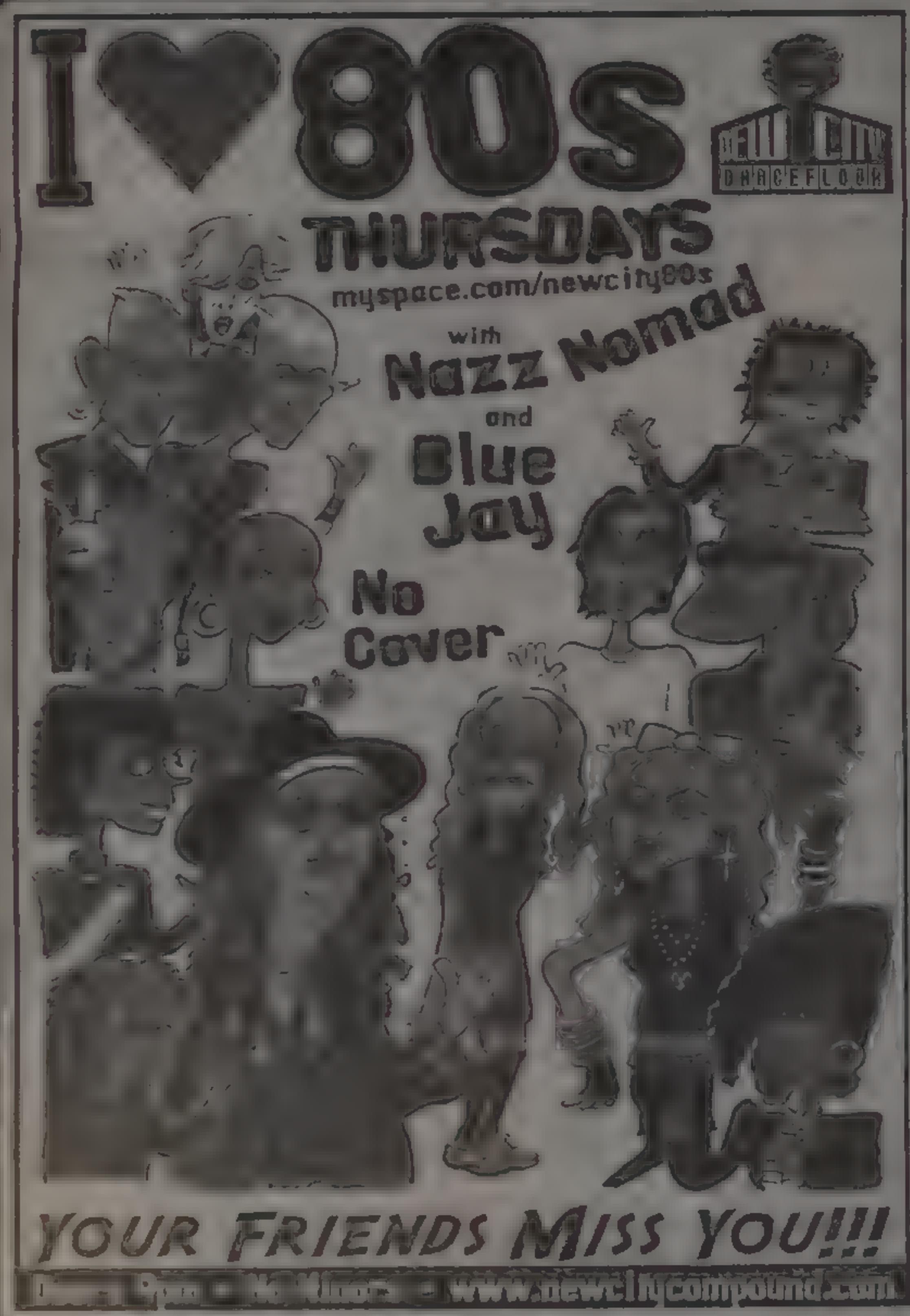
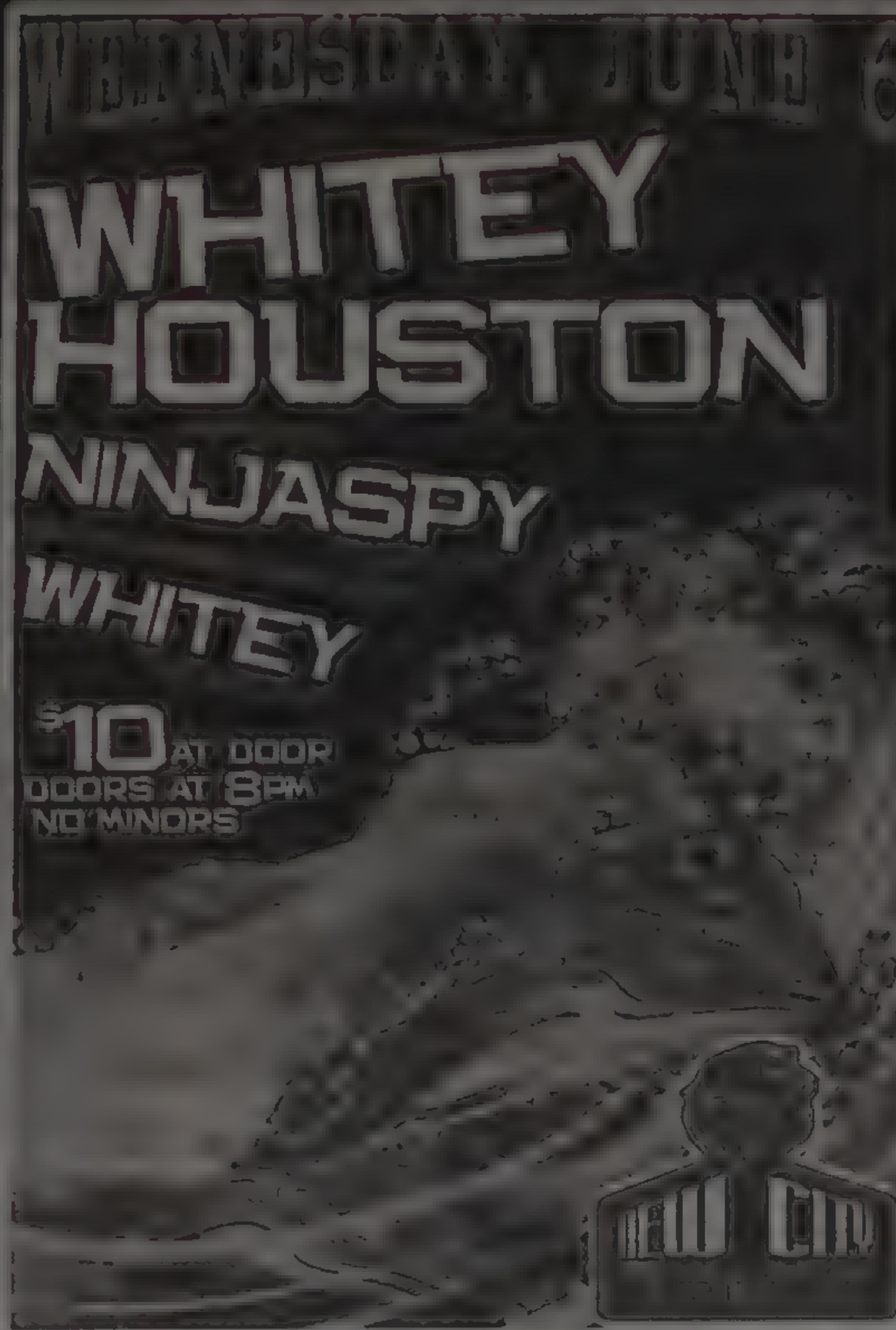
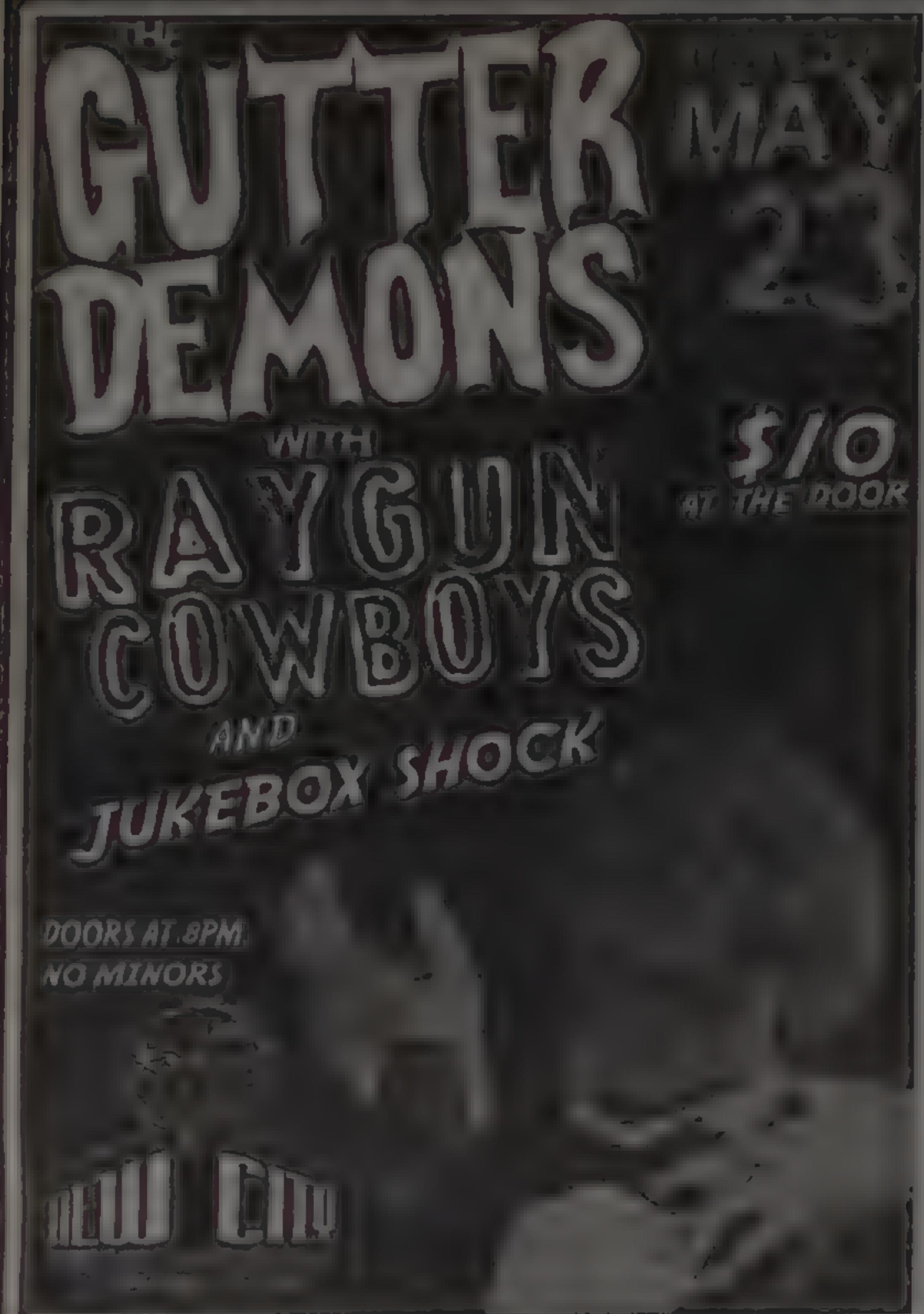
Short Stories is a dramatic and compelling collection of songs. Sharing personal fables of heroes and antiheroes, it is wrapped in a beauty that both entertains and gives the listener room to room.

Megatunes

Also performing a Megatunes
Sideshow on Friday May 11th @ 4PM

OUTSIDE

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VNEWSWORLD.COM





It's time to catch some Z-Trip

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vneweekly.com

I don't know if I've said this before or not, but if you ask me, being a DJ would be the sweetest job in the world. You fly around with just a suitcase full of records, see strange and exotic places and basically get paid to party and create the equivalent of a live mixtape every night.

I party and make mixtapes and nobody gives a shit about me, but when Arizona native Z-Trip comes to town, people are going to wear out the bottoms of their shoes dancing to his eclectic set.

"I've found the crowd of people that come out to see me do my thing are the most open minded people musically—I'm really fortunate for that," he says of his audience. "If you get that crowd and me in the same room there's no way to contain that energy."

PREVIEW

THU, MAY 17 (9 PM)
Z-TRIP
WITH DEGREE, AGENT ORANGE,
ECHO AND SHORTROUND, SWEETZ
STARLITE ROOM, \$25

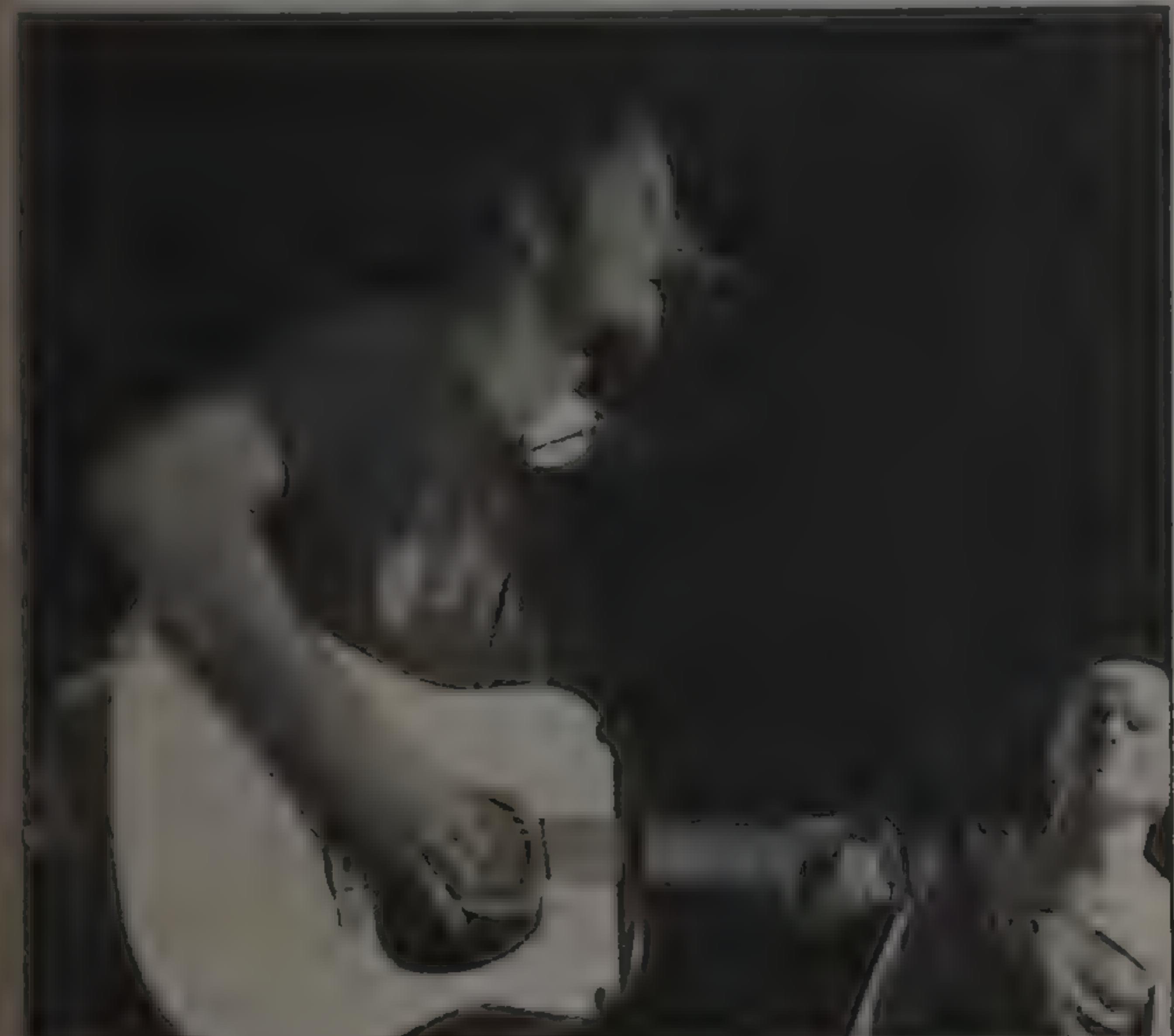
Z-Trip has been at the decks for a long time and is often credited as the founder of mashups—songs which take the vocal melody of one track, the instrumental track of another and juxtapose them into something new. Z-Trip himself prefers to stay modest and deflect the credit to other DJs but, when pressed, will admit he was involved.

"I'm probably the first person to really establish it, but I didn't create it," he says. "We used to call them blends. I still refer to them as blends, but people needed to name it to put it into a category."

Z-TRIP WAS EAGER to discuss the up-and-coming bands in Edmonton that he could work into his set to push the crowd over the edge, as well as his memories from the last few times he was here.

"I remember having a fucking great time last time I was there, people were really open minded and into it," he says. "I can't stay away from a place like Edmonton too long because that's where I might get my next inspiration. It's like Arizona—nobody comes to Arizona because it's a fucking desert, so we had to create our own scene. That's what I think Edmonton is like."

The DJ is well aware that significant differences do exist between this country and his own home, however, saying about his own name, "I guess it would be Zed-Trip for you guys." ▶



PREVIEW / FRI, MAY 11 (8 PM) / DUSTIN BENTALL / WITH THE DEEP DARK WOODS, OH SUSANNA / VELVET UNDERGROUND, \$10 "It's all about the songs, and just the way the whole business is changing these days," Dustin Bentall says about his vision for his future in music. "Everyone's giving the 'fuck you' to the big fuckin' head honchos and what not, and it's all going so independent that we can do this as long as we're patient with this. We're not out there just trying to land a quick fix deal. We want to be patient and get the right thing." It looks like Bentall's patience is paying off and the right thing might just be coming along. He released his debut album, *Streets With No Lights*, last year and came through Edmonton on a bill with Ridley Bent and Cameron Latimer, but now the album has been picked up for distribution by Fontana North and Bentall is heading back this way to headline a proper CD release show. He'll be bringing his gritty, alt-country songwriting to the stage, kicking up some dust and providing a welcome gateway into a warmer time of year. —EDEN MUNRO / eden@vneweekly.com

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BRENT OLIVER PRESENTS
& JCL PRODUCTIONS
UPCOMING EVENT LISTINGS:

THURSDAY MAY 10 **JCL PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS**
ARTS & CRAFTS ARTISTS...
APOSTLE OF HUSTLE
W/ KRIS GLABUSH AND HILLS LIKE WHITE ELEPHANTS
VELVET UNDERGROUND (DOORS @ 8 PM, TIX \$12)

THURSDAY MAY 10 **BOP PRESENTS**
LEGENDARY CANADIAN PUNK ROCKERS...
TEENAGE HEAD
W/ THE MARK BIRTLES PROJECT & THE B-MOVIES
STARLITE ROOM (DOORS @ 8 PM, TIX \$19)
ADV TIX AVAILABLE AT BLACKBYRD, LISTEN, FREECLOUD, & TICKETMASTER

SATURDAY MAY 12 **BOP AND JCL PRODUCE PRESENT**
JOEL PLASKETT EMERGENCY

W/ PETER ELKAS - STARLITE ROOM (DOORS @ 8 PM, TIX \$19)
ADV TIX AVAILABLE AT BLACKBYRD, LISTEN, MEGATUNES & TICKETMASTER

THURSDAY MAY 17 **JCL PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS**
DANNY MICHEL W/ AMY SEELY &
NYLA BROOK (A LA SQUINT SYSTEM)

CONVOCATION HALL, U OF A CAMPUS (DOORS @ 7 PM, ALL AGES)
ADV TIX AVAILABLE AT BLACKBYRD, LISTEN, MEGATUNES & TICKETMASTER

THURSDAY MAY 17 **SUBTERRANEAN SOUND & BOP PRESENT**
Z-TRIP
STARLITE ROOM (DOORS @ 9 PM)
ADV TIX AVAIL AT BLACKBYRD, LISTEN, FOOSH, COLOURBLIND, SOULAR & TICKETMASTER

SATURDAY JUNE 9 **STARLITE ROOM & BOP PRESENT**
CHOKE - FINAL SHOW!

W/ GHOSTS OF MODERN MAN, FRACTAL PATTERN, E TOWN BEATDOWN, HILLS HAVE EYES
STARLITE ROOM (DOORS @ 8 PM)
ADV TIX AVAILABLE AT BLACKBYRD, LISTEN, FREECLOUD & TICKETMASTER

SATURDAY JUNE 23 **BOP AND JCL PRODUCE PRESENT**
LAST GANG ARTISTS
MOTHER MOTHER
W/ D.B. BUXTON & GUESTS • VELVET UNDERGROUND (DOORS @ 8 PM, TIX \$10)

SUNDAY JUNE 24 **BOP PRESENTS**
K RECORDING ARTIST FROM OLYMPIA, WA
CALVIN JOHNSON
JULIE DOIRON
W/ FIELD & STREAM • LISTEN RECORDS
ALL AGES EARLY SHOW (DOORS @ 6 PM, SHOW AT 6:30)

FRIDAY JUNE 29 **BOP PRESENTS**
DESTROYER
W/ THE HYLOZOISTS & OHBIJOU
AT THE STARLITE ROOM TIX ON SALE MAY 10 AT 10AM

BRENT OLIVER **JCL** **PRODUCTIONS**

MUSIC WEEKLY

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THU LIVE MUSIC

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dynamite tour: Set Your Goals
Daggermouth, No Trigger, Hostage Life,
Mapping the Escape, The Johnsons, all
ages event, 5:30pm (doors), \$12 (day
of)/\$13 (adv) at Avenue Stagepark, The
Acoustic Drum Shop, Listen

BLACKBYRD PUB

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Age open stage, 8pm-1am

BLUE CHAIR CAFE

Beson, 8pm, \$15 (adv)/\$17 (door)

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

stage hosted by Alberta Cross, 6-10pm

DAVID

Open mic hosted by Chris

Wyners every Tue, 9pm

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

showcase hosted by rock 'n' roll Kenny

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Eleven track/alt, 7pm (doors), all ages

event, tickets available at TicketMaster

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

HUBERT'S Thursday night singer-

songwriter, roots, blues, and folk night

Lara Yule Singh and Alexa Melnychuk, 8pm, no cover

THE IVORY CLUB

Live Dueling Pianos

no cover, 8pm

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

11pm

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

with The Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues)

8:30pm-12:30am

JULIAN'S FINGER

Lawrence (light jazz piano)

M. E. LAZERTE SCHOOL THEATRE

The Show Must Go On: LaZerte concert band

band, and choir, 7pm, \$2

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

The Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers Society

7-10pm

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Artist: Lara Yule Singh, Alexa

Melnychuk, Soul Jazzy, \$30 (door)/\$25

(adv) available at TIX on the Square, Megatunes

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Christine Schmolka, 8pm, no cover

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

8:30pm, \$10 (door), \$5 (adv)

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Mark Birtles Project, The B-Moves, 8pm

(door), \$18 at Blackbyrd, Listen

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

7pm (doors), \$15 (adv)

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Dubfire Deep Dish, Taper GUS!, Main

Room, Dubfire Deep Dish, Paul Woolford

Luka Morrison, VIP Room, Fedde Le

Grande, Nitzer Ebb, Hector Castro

\$20 at Foosh, Colourblind, Alexus WEM

Yea! Hair, Treehouse Records, Fever

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with DJ SWAG

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Mis Fellow, midnight, DJ

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

top 40, country

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Room, Dubfire Deep Dish, Paul Woolford

Luka Morrison, VIP Room, Fedde Le

Grande, Nitzer Ebb, Hector Castro

\$20 at Foosh, Colourblind, Alexus WEM

Yea! Hair, Treehouse Records, Fever

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Thurdays: Urban Substances Sound Crew

franceable, Touch It, Lady Vishua, hosted

by KWAME

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Emergency, Petz Ettar, 8pm (door)

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

Dance lessons at 8pm, Salsa DJ to follow

EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

SOUTH Retro to New classic rock, R&B

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EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

SOUTH Retro to New classic rock, R&B

1000 COINS
THE ROCKS
1000 WHITEURBAN LOUNGE
1000 PUB

1000 BAR AND GRILL
1000 LOUNGE
1000 LOUNGE ON WHITE

CLASSICAL

1000 CATHEDRAL HALL

DJS

1000 TAP AND GRILL

1000 LOUNGE

1000 with DJ Red Dawn 2-7pm

1000 CITY KUBA DUB

1000 BYRNE'S DJ FINNEGAN 9pm (door)

1000 N.D. URBAN LOUNGE

1000 LOUNGE

1000 LOUNGE ON WHITE

1000 Night live hosted by DA Chocin
1000 DJ Sweet 12 9pm; the best of Urban's
1000 entertainment 10pm

1000 YESTERDAYS Sundays DJ Galtree and
1000 no cover

MON
LIVE MUSIC

1000 ON WHITE Steve Manner
1000

1000 PUB Open Mic Monday 8-10pm
1000 Friday 7-10pm

1000 CLUB Open Mic Mondays music
1000 comedy 8pm

1000 STUB

1000 YORK BAGEL CAFE Marco
1000 vino sambuca to Boero every Monday
1000 9:30pm-12am

1000 ZEPHYRVIEW COMMUNITY HALL

WHERE THEY ARE
VENUE
GUIDE

TURY CASINO 13103 Fort Rd 643-4000 • CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB 2021 Milbourne Rd, West, 462-6565 • CONVOCATION HALL Arts Building, University of Alberta, 492-4000 • COSMOPOLITAN MUSIC SOCIETY 420c Gateway 6-12 • COWBOYS 10102 104 St 461-1111 • CROWN AND ANCHOR PUB 15277 Castle Downs Rd, 111 St 472-7806 • CROWNE PLAZA CHATEAU LACOME 1011 Bellamy Hill, 492-2384 • DANTE'S BISTRO 17328 Stony Plain Rd, 486-4448 • DECADANCE 10018-105 St 990-1782/964-3168 • DOW CENTENNIAL CENTRE 8700-84 St Hwy 11 Fort Saskatchewan • FACULTÉ SAINT JEAN AUDITORIUM 8406 103 St • FORT BASKETCHEWAN 6706-84 St Fort Saskatchewan • DRUID 11606 Jasper Ave, 454-9926 • DUSTER S PUB 6402-118 Ave, 471-5654 • EDDIE SHORTS 1013 124 St, 463-9467 • CASTLE ROCK 507 St Albert Rd, St. Albert, 458-8766 • CATALYST THEATRE 8529 Gateway Blvd • CEN- 1000 ST ALBERT 386 St. Albert Rd, St. Albert • BELLEROSE BREAKDOWN 49 Girou Road, St. Albert • BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Continental Inn, 16625 Stony Plain Rd, 484-7751 • BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE 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The Penderecki String Quartet is always plucky for the present

By CHAN / sarah@vneweekly.com

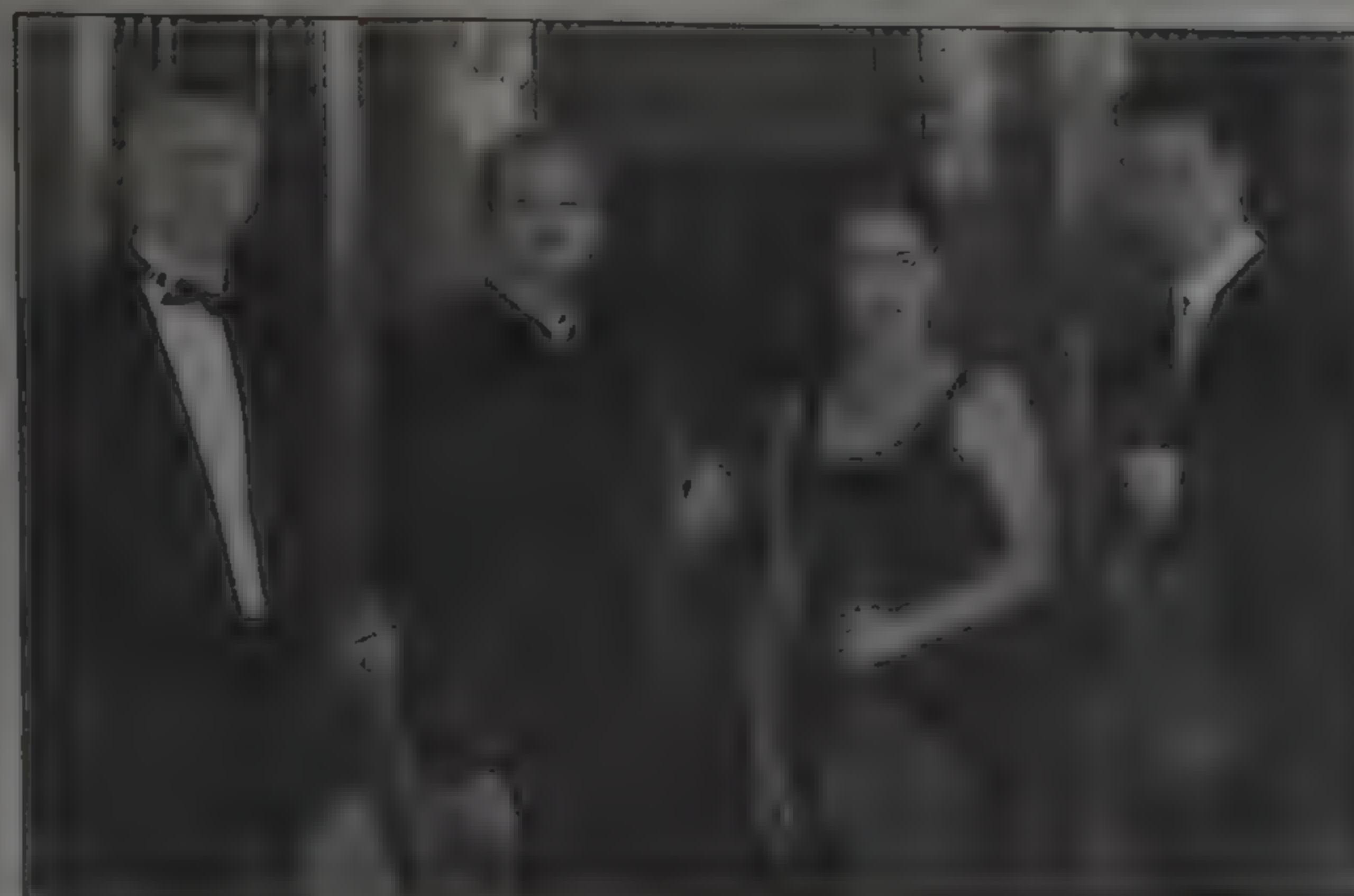
The Penderecki String Quartet—Jeremy Bell and Jerzy Kaplanek (violins), Christine Gajk (viola) and Simon Fryer (cello)—is not the kind of group that limits itself to music from the past.

The group's mandate is to play anything from any time, but they are often commissioned with modern pieces, and when they perform here in Edmonton, they will be presenting works by modern composers Darlene Chepil Reid, Richard von Berg, Omar Daniel, Piotr Gajla-Mozek and Laurie Radford.

"I think the reason we get asked to play as much contemporary music is because we take it very seriously," says violinist Bell. "As seriously as we would take playing a Beethoven string quartet."

THE RESULT of the musicians' dedication to their craft is evident in the variety of their work. In addition to their modern repertoire, the Penderecki String Quartet does not shy away from technological innovation; pieces by Daniel and Radford, for instance, will both incorporate live electronic processing.

"I think there is a really exciting future for live processing and live electronics—it's kind of like the quartet is performing with another musician," Bell enthuses. "This time we're



PREVIEW

FRI, MAY 11 (8 PM)
**THE PENDERICKI
STRING QUARTET**
CONVOCATION HALL, U OF A, \$15

playing with a laptop that is responding and communicating."

Another one of the pieces, by Gajla-Mozek, will add a political dimension to the concert's repertoire.

"It's a minimalist piece," Bell explains. "Basically 12 minutes of super loud playing for the quartet. It's what Piotr perceives to be the despotic behaviour of the world's worst

leaders and a protest against the innocent that are affected. It is a very intense and angry statement, and is very exhausting physically, emotionally and mentally."

With commissions for the next several years and an upcoming residency at an Italian festival this summer, the Penderecki String Quartet shows no signs of slowing down and Bell admits that he and his fellow musicians like it that way.

"Life is rich," he enthuses, "but it's also a tough life, and we work really hard. I'm just enjoying it so much! This is a life long dream of mine." □

JOEL PLASKETT EMERGENCY

IN CONCERT SATURDAY MAY 12TH, STARLITE ROOM



Ashtray Rock

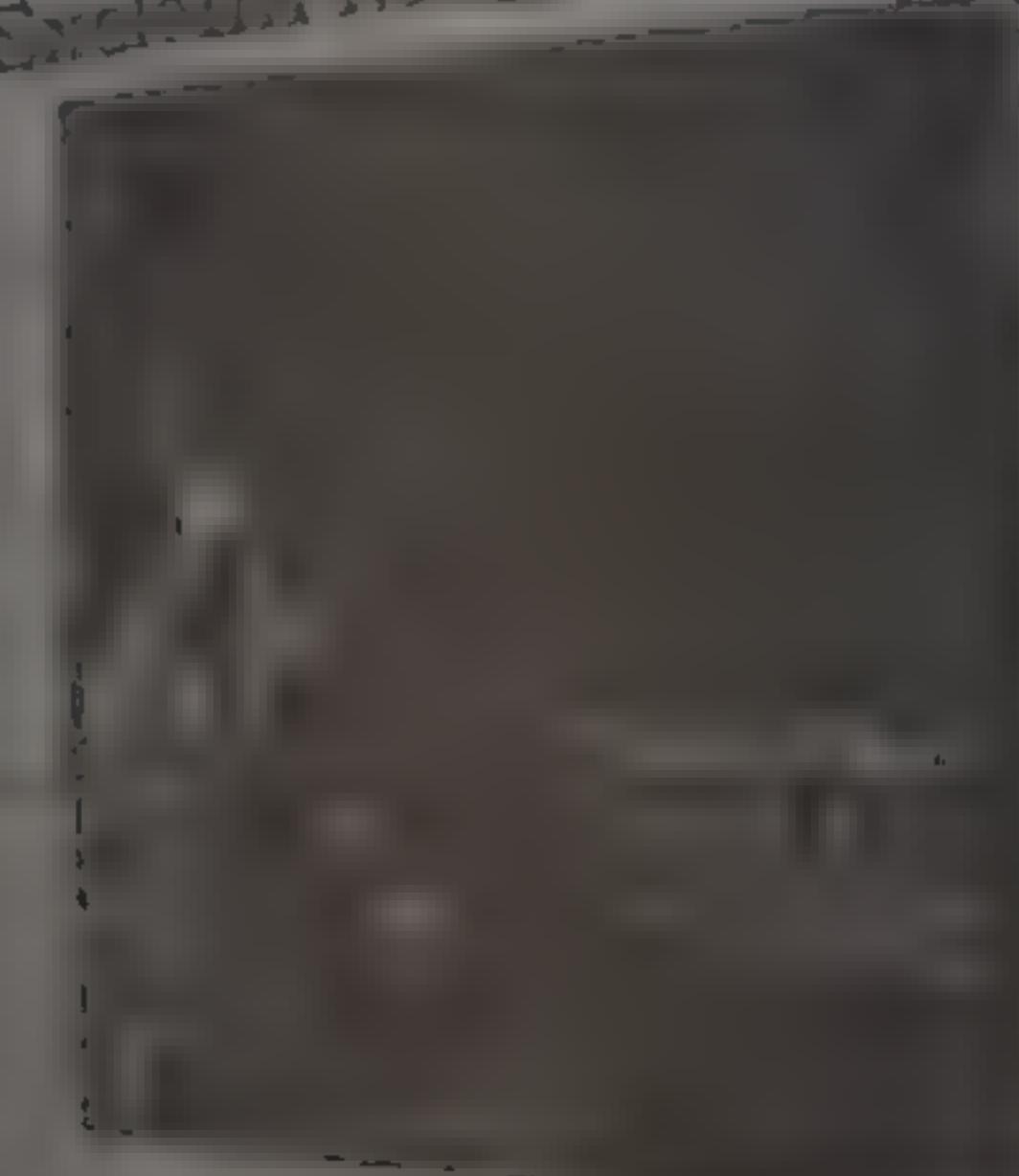
It's really a concept album about young rockers caught in a band-breaking love triangle. It's easily the best work Plaskett's ever done. *Ashtray Rock* is the album where Plaskett makes his move to follow in the footsteps of Elton John and Cohen. — *Charr Magazine*

www.joelplaskett.com

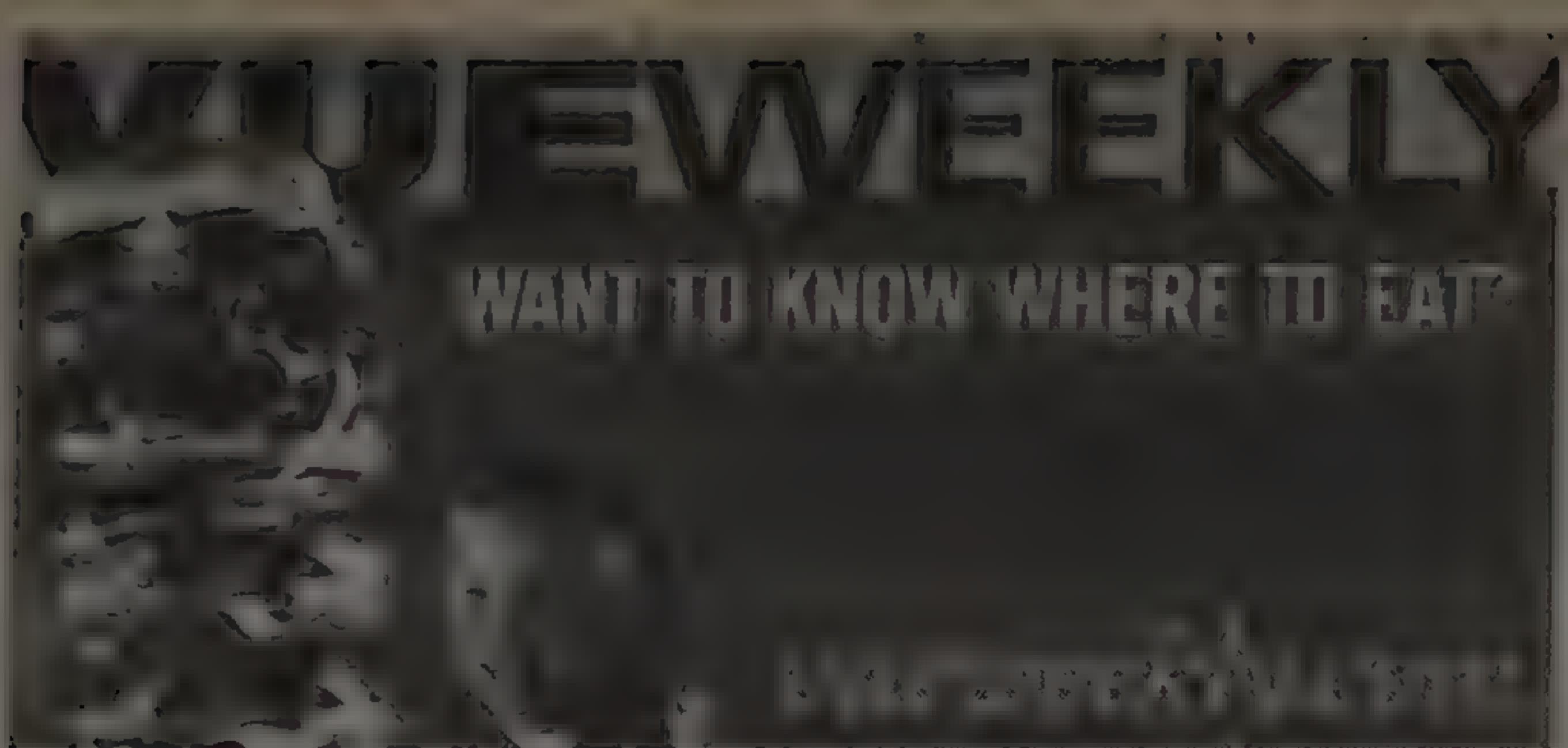


with special guest **Peter Elkas**

"Wall of Fire is more proof that Peter Elkas is one of the most talented songsmiths in the world." — *Exclaim Magazine*



www.peterelkas.com



Look, sir: a punk band

DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

You get a bit suspicious when you find out that their debut album is called *I Got A Bad Feeling About This*.

Greeted at the door of their band house/jam space by a black-furred mutt named R2D2, it's pretty much all but confirmed. Then drummer Keelan Malo-Smith flashes his belt buckle, and rolls up his right pant leg to reveal a tattoo collage of moments from the first trilogy, while guitarist Joey Woods brags about how many of

PREVUE SAT, MAY 12 (8 PM)
DOWN THE HATCH
WITH PINO, THE DIVIDED LEFT
BAR WILD, \$8 (\$12 WITH CD)

the Bantam paperbacks he's read (60, as a matter of fact).

The members of *Down the Hatch*, proprietors of some of Edmonton's hardest, purest punk music, are *Star Wars* fans. Like, huge *Star Wars* fans. Or, at least, their drummer and one of their guitarists are.

"I certainly like the series, but that's about as far as it goes," singer Liam Harvey Oswald says, with a certain restrained disapproval, from the couch that he shares with the remaining members of the band, bassist Bobby Millard and guitarist Johnny "The Musician" Evasiuk. "Last Friday was May the Fourth, though, and I bet those guys celebrated it."

"I actually said that to a couple of people. 'May the Fourth be with you,'" offers Malo-Smith.

"I'm not that much of a geek," counters Woods with a laugh.

"Yes, you are," shoots back Malo-Smith, as Woods acquiesces. "We wanted to put the Imperial logo on my drum kit, and an Imperial Star Destroyer on your guitar, because it's a Destroyer."

SHOTS ABOUT WHO'S GEEKIER than who aside, the general honesty with



which the band can talk about its fetish—sorry, two of its members' fetish—speaks to the simple but effective way *Down the Hatch* works.

They're a punk rock band, pure

and simple, and whether the belt buckle is *Star Wars* or the Misfits is only pretense is that there's absolutely nothing more to the band than what each of them brings to it. That fact helps when, say, your album is delayed a few months because of illness, technical problems and debt load.

"Recording the album was just ..." says Woods, trailing off.

"Yeah, but we had a good time doing it," pipes in Harvey Oswald. "Like, well, when we were laying down the drums, we it did over three days, but we had this keg—left over from a party, it just sat in a sun bank in my back yard for the three days—and basically all just lived in my house, not really eating, just drinking beer and trying to record. It turns out beer's not so great if you're wanting to record, but that was some of the best times I've ever had in a band."

"You can't forget the *GoldenEye* either," throws in Malo-Smith. "We played a ton of *GoldenEye* that weekend, too. That's all you really need to make a good album: a bunch of beer and *GoldenEye*. It really sort of takes the edge off being a month behind schedule, drinking and playing *Nintendo 64*."

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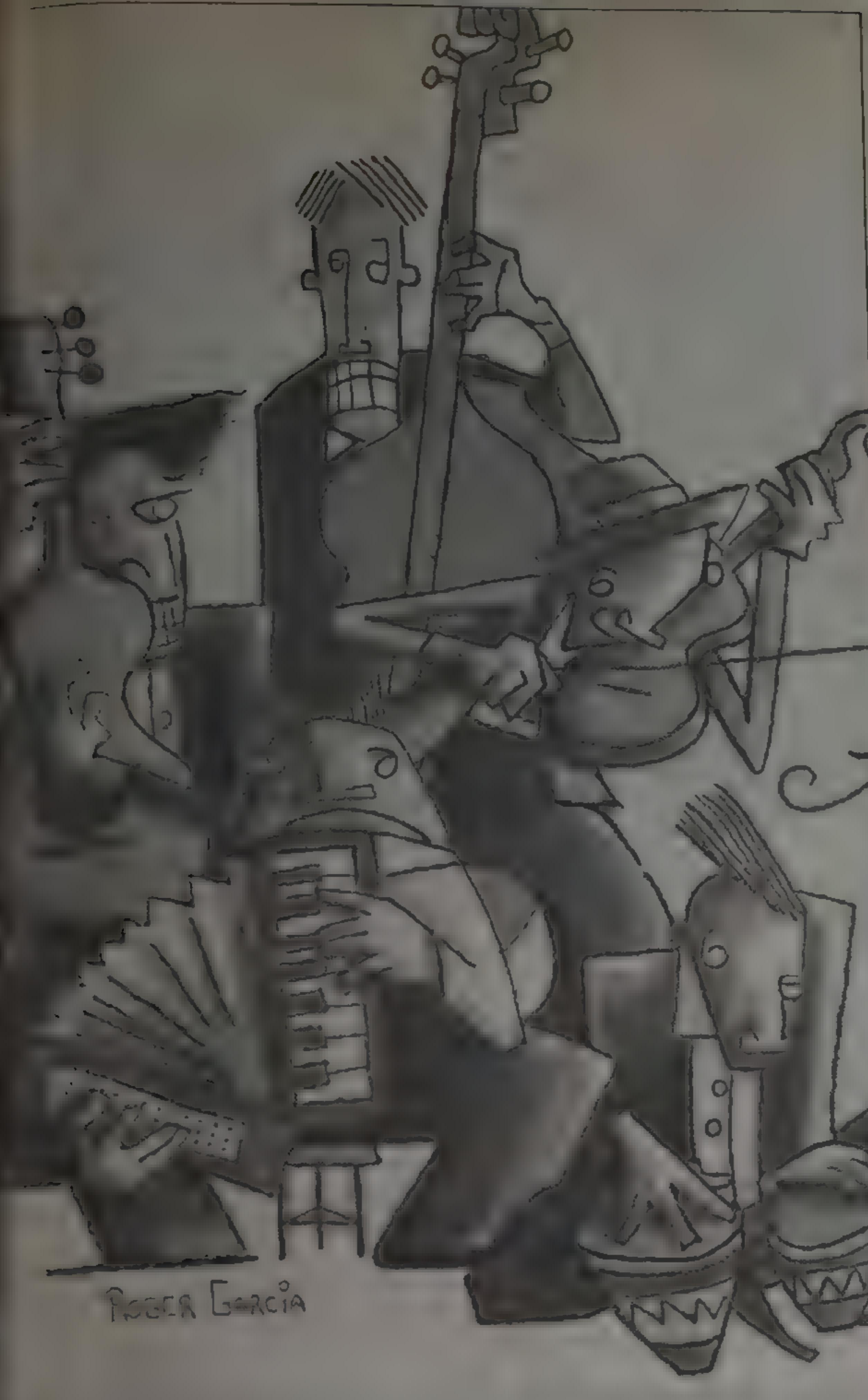
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VUE WEEKLY



Le Fuzz speaks in many, many tongues

BY DAWN KNETTLE/ sherry@vneweekly.com

Our music is about people and connecting with the global spirit. We hijack different world beats and songs of other cultures," says Frank Bessai of Le Fuzz, "but those cultures are also our home here in Alberta."

"I call it Alberta Gypsy soul," says Bessai's bandmate Jason Kodie. "We make our music honestly—we've been in these places and jammed with locals."

About six years ago Kodie and Bessai met up after Bessai returned to Edmonton from a couple of years in Argentina. Kodie says that the resulting multilingual band is a sort of hangover from Hookahman, the previous group in which they played together, only this time around they wanted their musical partnership to emphasize their cultural diversity.

Kodie, who refers to himself as an aspiring "trilingualist," is learning to speak Spanish, and is already fluent in English and French. He's lived in Quebec and out of his accordion case while busking in France. Bessai is "multilingual" and has a brain for languages, so both musicians find it natural to perform the music from the

PREVIEW

FRI, MAY 11 (8 PM)

LE FUZZ

WITH FIREFLY THEATRE, MARIA DUNN, JOËL LAVOIE
LA CITÉ FRANCOPHONE (8627 - 91 STREET), \$20

cultures that are so familiar to them.

LE FUZZ'S RHYTHMIC, upbeat music defies borders, but the Spanish, French or Russian songs found on the group's new CD, *Vie la Vida!* are briefly condensed into English on the album's inside cover to give us monolingualists an overview of each song.

Vie la Vida! is a string of lively original and traditional songs about politics, love, travelling and drinking, drawn from the six years that the band has been together.

"It's an updated spin on the traditional," Kodie says, referring to the band's MySpace bio, which describes the music as sounding "like Los Lobos getting drunk with Frank Sinatra while the band from the Pogues plays on and on."

"There's a blend of accordion, fiddles and percussion," Kodie finishes. "People are surprised at how much they enjoy the accordion in this context." ▀

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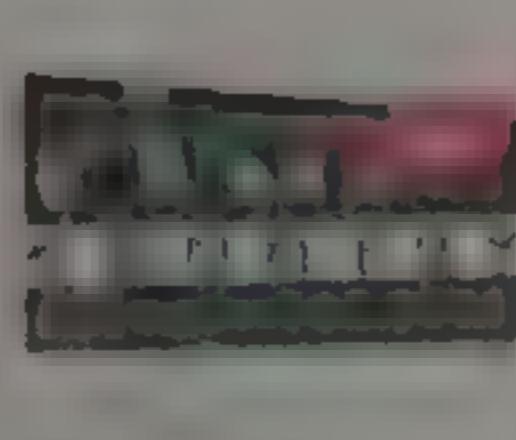
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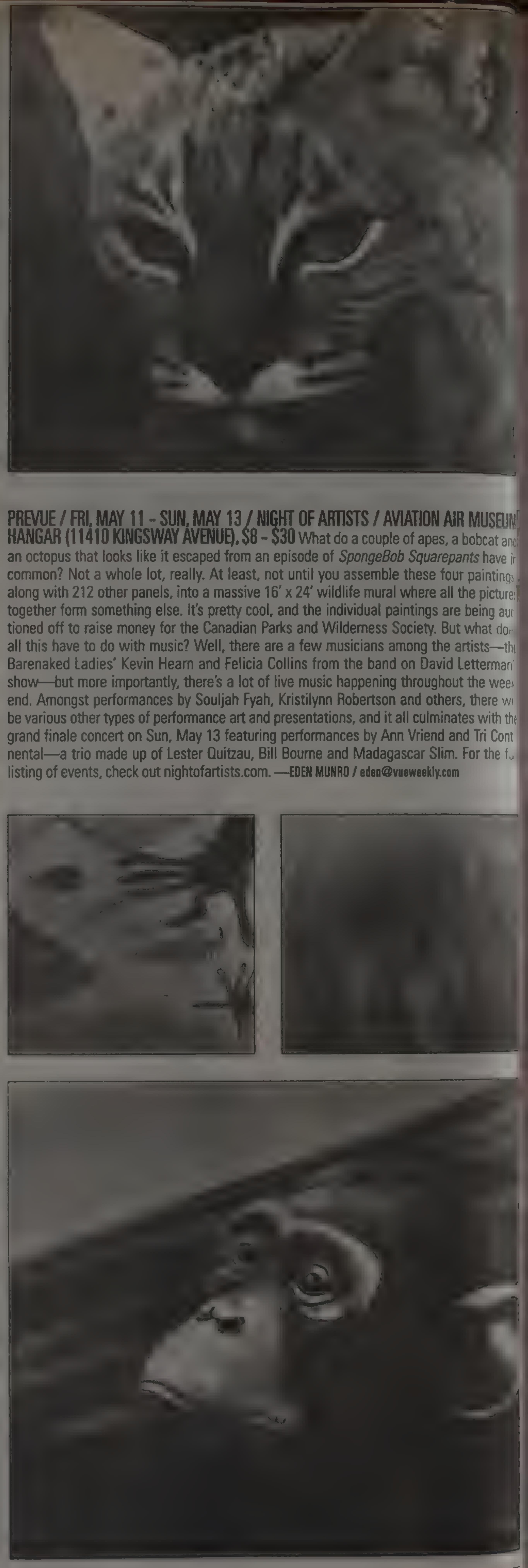
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REVUE / SUN, MAY 6 / !!! / STARLITE ROOM Whether you pronounce it Chk-chk-chk or Pow-pow-pow, !!! is undeniably one of the best live acts on the planet. Most of that has to do with lead singer Nic Offer, who has more dance moves than you can find in a gay bar playing "Billie Jean." Gentlemen, take notice: even if you may have a slight potbelly and a noticeable bald spot, you're only a cowbell and a case of Red Bull away from some sweet dance moves. Combined with bass so loud my eyeballs shook, Offer's shimmies and crazy-man jump kicks turned a Sunday night at the Starlite Room into a hot and sweaty blur. I can only hope Nik Kozub of Shout Out Out Out Out, who played an opening DJ set, took notes so that he can add those awesome moves to his repertoire.

—JOEL KELLY / joel@vneweekly.com



REVUE / MON, MAY 14 - WED, MAY 16 / METRIC / WITH SEBASTIEN GRAINGER / STARLITE ROOM, SOLD OUT Remember that sweet band, the one that the blond girl in the white t-shirt on that crappy solo record was in? I ain't talkin' 'bout Gwen Stefani, 'cause her solo records are awesome. No, it's Metric, silly! Remember? They were so cool back in the day, and then Emily Haines wussed out on us, but it seems like she's done with all that and she's back to make us blow our tops! This will most definitely be your last time seeing them in such a small venue. Well, it will be if you've already got tickets to their sold-out show in June. —BRYAN BOTTLES / bry@vneweekly.com

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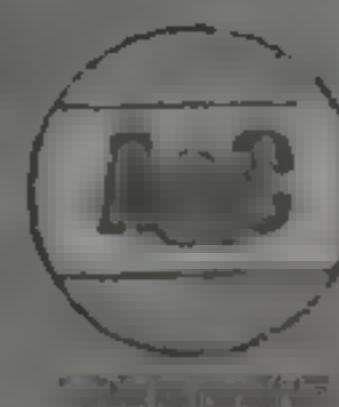
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A black and white promotional photograph for the movie 'The Reason'. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit and tie is seen from the side, looking towards a woman in a red dress who is partially visible. In the background, a large, metallic, 3D-style sign reads 'JUNCTION' with 'THE' written above it. The overall atmosphere is dramatic and mysterious.

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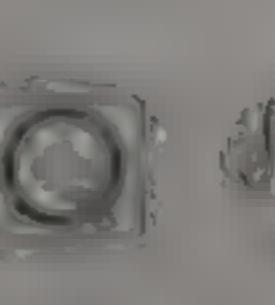
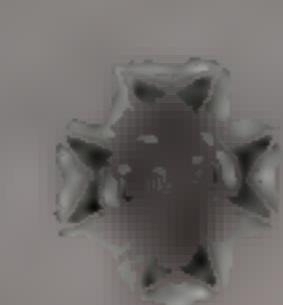
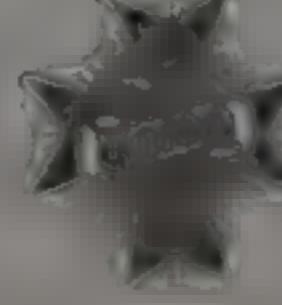
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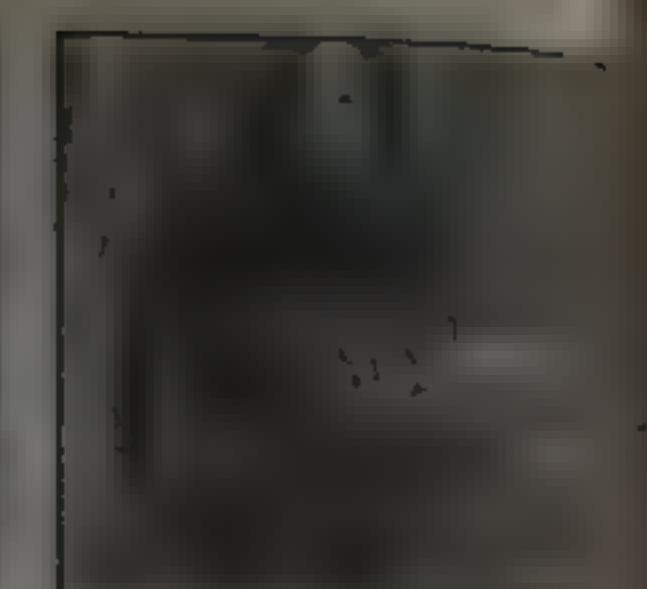
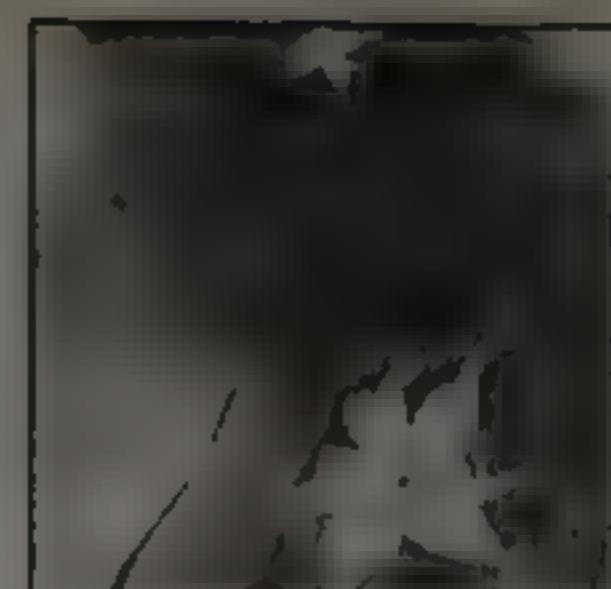
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ALBUM REVIEWS

NEW SOUNDS

PETER ELKAS
WALL OF FIRE
MAPLEMUSIC

JOEL KELLY / joel@vnewswEEKLY.com

What is it that makes Canadian singer-songwriters and beards go so well together, like maple syrup and sausages? Both Sam Roberts and Peter Elkas are championing the "beards are the new black" look. (Secretly, I think Win Butler is trying to grow one too, but his patchy peach fuzz can't compete.)

Whatever the case may be, Elkas has a lot more to be proud of than just facial hair on his new record, *Wall of Fire*. Surprisingly soulful, Elkas has a knack for bringing to mind Marvin Gaye and Bill Withers while maintaining his earnest Springsteen influences. The result is a consistently excellent record across 12 tracks, with single-ready "Fall Apart Again" and "Sweet Nancy" standing out as highlights. Hammond organ figures prominently.

Elkas has made somewhat of a name for himself touring as a solo artist, opening for notable acts such as Feist and k-os. Here's hoping this new rendition can attract some more deserved attention, beard and all.

BEBEL GILBERTO
MOMENTO
CRAMMEO DILES

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vnewswEEKLY.com

Having recently re-watched Peter Sellers's *The Party*, I am reminded of Claudine Longet's performance in the film when I listen to Bebel Gilberto sing on her third release. In looking up Longet's name, however, I discovered

her history of cocaine and guns in swinging '70s Aspen, so I am a little reticent to make the comparison. Therefore, I am also reminded of Carla Bruni. A natural progression from the electronica of her debut *Tanto Tempo* and the acoustic *Bebel Gilberto*, the Brazilian chanteuse's breathy voice floats over simple melodies and rhythms, evoking both an all-together new sound and one that feels its roots firmly in '60s bossa nova.

The album's subdued down-tempo flavour in "Bring Back the Love"—co-written with the Brazilian Girls (who aren't Brazilian)—folds dreamily into "Close to You," before giving over to a beautiful mixture of transcontinental influences in "Os Novis Yorkinos" (featuring the vocals of Brazilian Girls' Sabina Sciubba). For some, the fact that much of the record is on the intensely mellow side, only significantly stepping up the tempo on "Caçada" and "Tranquilo," might be a turnoff. But for me, the smoothness of Gilberto's delivery is like a gentle breeze on sun-kissed skin.

SOCIAL CODE
SOCIAL CODE
UNIVERSAL

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vnewswEEKLY.com

Major labels in Canada are struggling, and while they trot out well-worn excuses—you know, file sharing / "stealing"—I suspect the real reason is that mainstream commercial labels are increasingly out-of-touch and behind-the-times. What's worse is that, in their race to the bottom, these bloated monoliths are dragging some decent acts down with them.

St Albert-based Social Code's new self-titled LP, for instance, is full of

reasonably catchy, well-written pop rock anthems. They're easy enough on the ears, certainly, with glossy back-up vocals balanced with perfectly guttural howls and guitars that rage and coo alternately when appropriate. *Social Code* sounds perfect, actually and that's the problem.

The band formerly known as Fifth Season is undeniably talented and experienced, and I don't doubt for a second that, under different circumstances, they could have put out a album that was more challenging, or at least had a little bit of an edge. Instead *Social Code* sounds like an amalgamation of the last five years of commercial "alternative" music: part emo, part nu grunge, part power-ballad.

It's not a bad record, really, and I bet Sonic plays the shit out of it, (admittedly) the delight of most listeners. But next time, let's hope these guys try to sound more like themselves, and less like a bunch of suits in Toronto think they ought to.

OH SUSANNA
SHORT STORIES
STELLA

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vnewswEEKLY.com

Under her performing moniker, Oh Susanna, Suzi Ungerleider creates characters that are plainspoken in the same earthly poetic way that the people in a Thornton Wilder play are—they have concerns that are melodramatic in a completely ordinary fashion; the territory of *ABC After School Specials* or *Oprah*. They wear their jeans too tight, love their men too hard, have their babies too young. They harbour an almost embarrassing hope for the future, despite the high likelihood that they will get their asses kicked as much as all the waitresses on *Alice* put together.

For the most part, *Short Stories* sounds like "Jolene"-era Dolly Parton hitched up with the Georgia velvet soul of Gladys Knight, especially the good-bad-girl tracks "Greyhound Bus" and "Schoolyard," but Ungerleider eviscerates her credibility with the Céline Dion-esque soppiness of "Mi Liberty," a gag-inducing construction of swelling strings that may as well be wrapped in the American flag.

Beyond this lapse, the question remains: why would an intelligent creative woman create and celebrate such unremarkable and petty female characters? Springsteen managed to make his Everymen heroic through their actions, which broke them out of their lives. Ungerleider attempts to make hers heroic through their fantasies, which have a faint whiff of the cheapness of old pulp romances, and serve to anchor them to their inevitable, depressing fates.

Oh Susanna plays the Velvet Underground on Fri, May 11.

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Charting l'irrelevence

MUSIC**ENTER SANDOR**
STEVEN SANDOR
steven@vneweekly.com

Anyone who has followed this column knows that, even though I don't care for most top-of-the-pops kind of stuff, I am absolutely fascinated by what has happened to the charts recently.

Thanks to a world filled with podcasts, satellite radio and musical choice, the market has become so spread out that it takes just a few thousand records sold to top the charts.

This week, I'd like to chat about a uniquely Canadian trend in our top 10. Because album sales are so low, and a good spurt of 6 000 to 7 000 albums sold in a week can now get an artist into the top 10, artists with strong cult followings—like the Shins, the Arctic Monkeys and Modest Mouse—make quick appearances in the top 10 and then fizzle out. That's because their fans, the ones who still go to record stores, go out and buy their albums as soon as they come out, giving these bands enough sales to get on the charts.

But even more interesting is the geographic shift on the charts. Because French-speaking artists appeal to a very loyal Québec music audience, they are taking over the charts. A clump of sales in Montréal and Québec City is enough to get you those few thousand records sold that put you on the charts nowadays.

In the Nielsen SoundScan chart of Apr 26, five of the top 10 albums were recorded by Francophones. That's half of the top 10 dominated by one province. The top albums were: *De*

Retour A La Source by Isabelle Boulay at # 2, *Comme ça* by Marie-Élaine Thibert at # 4, Marc-André Fortin's self-titled album at # 5, *Il Était Une Fois ... Les Gra* from Les Grandes Gueules at # 6 and *L'échec du matériel* by Daniel Bélanger at # 9. Of those five, three enjoyed their debuts in the charts that week.

Oh, and Les Grandes Gueules are a Québec comedy troupe that records only in French. With them holding onto the # 6 spot, that's all you need to

Artists with strong cult followings—like the Shins, the Arctic Monkeys and Modest Mouse—make quick appearances in the top 10 and then fizzle out.

know about how few records you need to sell to make a dent on the charts.

Yes, all of these artists are superstars in Québec—but, for the most part, they're anonymous in the rest of Canada. But as Québec sales make more and more of an impact on a watered-down world of CD sales, that province's artists have taken over.

And, in the end, the charts will soon have little relevance, or meaning, to anyone wondering what is popular outside of Québec. □

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of Vue Weekly, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

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V/A CANADA: WE ARE MORE SINGING

So embarrassing,
So sadly out of touch it's
Kind of comical

MATTHEW CLARK EUPHONIUM ARTISTS

This makes the French Horn
Seem like a Flying V, yet
The man has horn skillz

UNBNAKED LADIES ARE MEN INSPIRATION

Oafs sang about turds
For 10 years, somehow managed
To float to the top

MIRACLE FORTRESS FIVE ROSES SECRET CITY

This is amazing!
Sweet, sincere, hip, engaging ...
Something for all y'all

KEN ANDREWS SECRETS OF THE LOST SATELLITE DINOSAUR FIGHT

Guy from Failure makes
Same sounding disc, I predict:
Another Failure!

RUSH SNAKES & ARROWS ANTIM

Another disc for
Prog-rock nerds to gush over
Whilst I ignore them

FISHBONE STILL STUCK IN YOUR THROAT SOUND IN COLOR

Without Fishbone, there
Would never have been Bootsauce
Thanks a lot, assholes

DOLORES O'RIORDAN ARE YOU LISTENING? SANCTUARY

Solo Cranberry
I ain't heard this much honking
Since the geese flew south

ANIKIA STEEP TRAILS BIELER BROS

Latin metal-core
Hey, I don't make this shit up
Oh wait, yes I do



Choir sings low, carries Bob back home

TARA ZUROWSKI / tara@vneweekly.com

Something that amazes me about this group is that the best they ever do with their music is always on stage," begins Liana Bob, director of the **Vancouver Orpheus Male Choir**. "I think that often with choirs, you have your rehearsals, and then you expect that things won't go as well at concerts due to nerves and what not.

"They always do their most passionate, most expressive, most concentrated work on stage," she continues. "It's such a pleasure to be able to direct a group like that."

The 45 professional male singers who make up the VOMC are embarking on a trip to Edmonton for the first time since their formation in 1992, and they'll be bringing along a repertoire that is deep and vast.

"I chose some of the songs," says Bob, "but this choir's been around for 15 years, and some of the music has been around for awhile. We do every-thing in book, and every season we add about 10 new pieces. We also change from our repertoire because there's some great stuff—everything from pieces from operas to pop songs like Josh Groban's 'You Raise Me Up' to ballads—there's a huge variety. The men like to try to find something that will touch everyone."

"**AND THESE MEN** are great performers," Bob adds eagerly. "Though

PREVIEW
SAT, MAY 12 (7:30 PM)
THE VANCOUVER ORPHEUS MALE CHOIR
WITH EKOS SINGERS
CONVOCATION HALL, U OF A, \$15

many of them are seniors, they like to keep active and sing a lot. It's always a very lively atmosphere. They are not a chorus that stands on stage. When we do 'Drunken Sailor,' the men hiccup and act drunk in it. It's a hoot. There'll be some surprises there at the concert, you can bet."

While the choir is making its first trip here, Bob is already familiar with the city, having pursued her interest in directing and leading ensembles at the University of Alberta. During her time in Edmonton, Bob was a fundamental part of the formation and launch of the jazz choir at the University.

"I was really lucky that I was there at a prospering time at the U of A," she says. "They'd been looking to expand and start a jazz choir. They'd never done it, and so when I was doing my Masters there, I thought that that would be something that was sort of useful."

"The University of Alberta Jazz Choir is still continuing, which is exciting," she continues, boasting. "It is quite an honour, and I'm looking forward to being back in Edmonton." ▶

ZODIAC | FREE WILL ASTROLOGY
RUDI BURKSWY
www.vneweekly.com

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

I'm a big fan of facing your problems head-on and dealing forthrightly with your pain. But what if that approach isn't always best? Renowned psychologist Richard Lazarus said he wanted to "challenge the view that psychological health demands full realism." He believed that some sick people get healthy faster by refusing to admit how serious their problems are. To those in stressful situations, he recommended that they could reduce their anxiety by describing their predicament in a matter-of-fact way. "Avoiding what is painful, to a great extent, seems to serve a positive function," he concluded. Although I'm not sure this strategy is universally applicable, I do recommend it for you right now, Aries.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

For crabby, mean-spirited counsel about how to conduct your personal life, listen to Dr Laura's syndicated radio show. For silly chatter about trivial subjects, read the "most intelligent woman in the world," Marilyn vos Savant. But if, on the other hand, you'd like brilliant guidance about where to direct your substantial life energy next, tap into your own intuition. The astrological omens suggest that it's working better now than it ever has. It's far more useful to you than any so-called expert's blatherings.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

The Yanyuwa aborigines of Australia believe that music literally has curative properties. In one traditional method, the healer sings a medicine song directly into the top of the head of the patient. The sound circulates through the body, driving out the illness or unease. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, something resembling this approach could help chase away your current malaise. Do you think you could find a shaman or shaman wannabe to perform the musical "surgery"? If not, do the job yourself. Spend 20 minutes a day singing the most potent healing songs you know into your own head.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

The counsel I'm about to offer is not given lightly. If you choose to heed it, it could wreak discomfort and disorder, at least initially. And you'll have to pump yourself up with more courage than you're used to feeling. Still, I'm convinced it's the right thing for you to hear; I believe that any breakdown it might

engender will ultimately lead to a breakthrough. So here's the advice, courtesy of Franz Kafka: "Don't bend; don't water it down; don't try to make it logical; don't edit your own soul according to the fashion. Rather, follow your most intense obsessions mercilessly."

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

In 2005, former mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani was paid \$100 000 for speaking at a fundraiser for tsunami relief. That's a prime example of giving a gift with steel cable-like strings attached. Be wary of this phenomenon popping up in your own life, Leo. Don't accept such mixed blessings, and don't offer them, either. That's the cautionary news. The encouraging news is that if you're vigilant in guarding against generosity—that isn't-really-generosity, the coming weeks will be favourable for the giving and receiving of modest gifts that have a big impact. Visualize Giuliani getting, say, an honorarium of \$5 000 for his help in raising money for a good cause, and you'll plant the right seed in your subconscious mind.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

I was enjoying a leisurely bike ride in a rural neighbourhood where I'd never been. The houses were sparsely placed amidst overgrown meadows. The temperature was balmy. My endorphins had kicked in and the fragrance of wildflowers had rendered me giddy. Then my mood shifted suddenly. While rolling downhill on a one-lane road, I hit a speed bump—freakishly, unexpectedly, right in the middle of paradise. Why was it there? My bike stopped cold and I flew through the air, landing awkwardly. The damage was minimal and the shock was a bit invigorating. Still, I advise you, Virgo, to watch out for and avoid a comparable speed bump out there in the frontier you're exploring. There's no inherent karmic necessity for you to experience an inconvenient interruption like mine. Add 10 per cent more caution to your roving and rambling.

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

"Ordinary life does not interest me," wrote Anaïs Nin in one of her diaries. "I seek only the high moments. I am searching for the marvelous." Normally I might discourage you from pursuing that approach, Libra. You've got money to make and appointments to keep and groceries to buy, after all. And doing those tasks can make it hard to specialize in the marvelous. But for a limited time only, the planetary powers-that-be are granting you an exemption from the ordinary. You need intimate contact with unreasonable beauty, sweet anomalies, beguiling ephemera, inexplicable joys and small

changes that inspire reverence.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

It'll be fine to eat ice cream with a spoon this week. It'll be kind of cool to eat through exits, too, and you may generate good luck if you smash a mirror with a hammer or talk about subjects you're normally too superstitious to broach. You should also consider fixing things before they're broken and listen ravenously to what's not being said. Please avoid trying to drink coffee with a sieve, Scorpio. Refrain from saying what you don't mean. And don't dare try to fall up.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

"We were expelled from Paradise," wrote Franz Kafka in *The Blue Octopus Notebooks*, "but Paradise was not destroyed. In a sense our expulsion from Paradise was a stroke of luck, had we not been expelled, Paradise would have had to be destroyed." Those ruminations strike a chord in Sagittarius? I hope they move you to turn your thoughts towards your personal version of paradise-on-earth. Consider the possibility that it's important for you to have been exiled from that land of bounty once upon a time. Meditate on what you'll need to do to prepare yourself to return when it becomes accessible again in the future.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

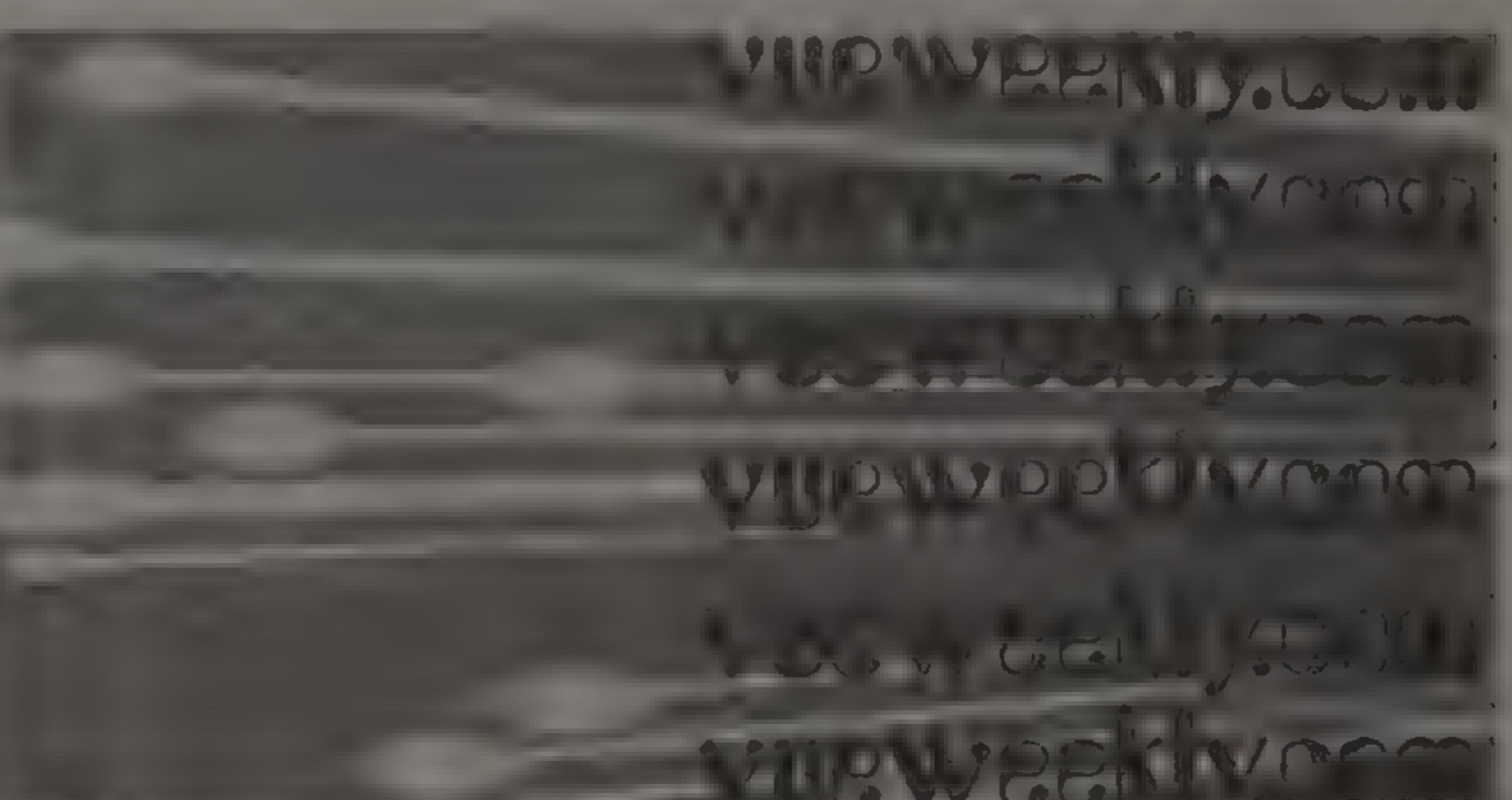
"Most painting in the European tradition involved painting the person's mask," wrote abstract expressionist painter Robert Motherwell. "Modern art rejected all that. Our subject matter has been the person behind the mask." Your next assignment is similar to that of modern art: Capricorn: to recognize everyone's persona, but delve deeper to explore the maddeningly complex, crazily inscrutable, gorgeously wounded souls that's hidden beneath everyone's persona. Strip away the surface, in other words, and investigate the essence lurking below.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

The zoo in Anchorage, Alaska built a treadmill for its four-tonne elephant. The cost was high—\$150 000—but hey, if you own an elephant, you'd better take good care of it, right? Use this vignette as your operative metaphor, Aquarius. What's the symbolic equivalent of an elephant in your life—some exotic resource or giant responsibility or out-of-place treasure? Whatever it is, it needs extra care and attention. I'm not saying you have to spend a load of money. But you should at least spend some of your high-quality time.

PISCES (MAR 19 - APR 18)

Dear Pisces: We need a break from all these words we use, all this rational discourse. So how about if we sing to each other in a made-up language? Or we could use felt-tip markers to draw pictures and symbols on each other's bodies. Let's jump in over our heads and dance for each other underwater. Let's pretend we're two Helen Kellers tapping out codes on each other's wrists and ankles. Let's scrawl the stream-of-consciousness truths we want to express to each other on golden cards, and read them aloud to each other like we're announcing Oscar winners. ▶



EVENTS WEEKLY

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WEDNESDAY IS FRIDAY AT 3 PM

CLUBS/LECTURES

AGAINST GENTRIFICATION Alex Taylor School Gym, 9321 Jasper Ave • Public Forum featuring speakers Neil Smith and Anna Hohendorf, followed by discussion and snacks • Thu, May 10 (7-9pm)

ALBERTA COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATIVE The Westerner, Red Deer, www.abcod.ca (496-8777) • Featuring David LoPage speaking on how the community economic development model can engage business in addressing issues that affect the well-being of communities • May 11 (10am) • Pre-register

BEAUTIFY 110 AVENUE AREA Alberta Avenue Community League, 9210-118 Ave (496-1812) • Workshops on gardening, composting, Aboriginal gardening, flower arranging • Sat, May 12 (9am-3pm) [11am-3pm]

BUDDHISM LECTURE SERIES-A PHILOSOPHY FOR LIVING SGI Culture Centre, 2nd Fl, 10711-107 Ave • Wed, May 16 (7pm) • Free

CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 11205-101 St (496-1999) • Basketball; Mon (5-7pm) • Healing Circle; Mon (5-7pm) • Boxing; Mon/Thu (7-9pm), Tue (5-7pm) • Free

CATHERINE BURGESS ART TALK Stanley A. Milner Theatre (presenters) 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq • Lecture by sculptor Catherine Burgess, presented by the Alberta Society of Artists and the Edmonton Public Library • Thu, May 19 (7pm) • Free

CONVERSATION CAFE Unity of Edmonton Church, 13212-105 Ave • Meeting presented by Rev. Yvonne Racine • Every Tue (1-3pm)

ENDER BULLYING SYMPOSIUM Grant MacEwan College City Centre Campus, 10070-104 Ave, www.gbcalberta.com (415-1734) • Presented by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Alberta • Opening ceremonies and panel speakers: Fri, May 11 (7-10pm) • Workshops (each Adult workshop streams): Sat, May 12 (8am-5pm) • \$50 adult/\$25 (youth 13-18), parents, family members, youth workers and educators

EDMONTON CHAPTER OF THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS Gemini Co-op Apartment Building Penthouse, 9708-110 St • Annual general meeting with guest speaker Gil McGowan • Wed, May 16 (6:30pm)

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS TRAINING/KNOW YOUR RIGHTS-KNOW YOUR POWER St. Theresa's Catholic Parish, 1032-29 Ave (485-1089) • Information, support and discussions • Sat, May 17 (9am-noon) • www.greateredmontonalliance.com

FAIR TRADE WORKS! TEN YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES TransAlta Arts Barns, 10330-84 Ave (493-9236) • Annual Fair Trade Fair and Film Festival to celebrate National Fair Trade Week • Sat, May 19 (noon) • \$5-\$8 (suggested donation for films/free for low-income) • www.edmontonsmall-press.org

FOOT & SADDLES 10242-106 St (423-5014) • Large tavern with pool tables, restaurant, shows. Members only

BUDDY'S NITE CLUB 11725B Jasper Ave (488-7736) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDiva and Donatella NE1 in the GoDonna Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fallow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ Sexyxx Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fallow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'am famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser

DOWN UNDER MENS BATH HOUSE 12224 Jasper Ave (482-7960) • Open 24/7 • www.gayedmonton.com

EDMONTON MUSIC NIGHT • A mature social group, couples and singles welcome • E-mail edmontonmusicnight@hotmail.com for more info

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common social interests meet every 2nd Sunday of most months at 2:30pm for a social period, a short meeting and a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. email edmontontimers@yahoo.ca

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION www.edmontonrbba.org • Monthly after business mixer. Network and share contacts in the GLBT business community • Second Weds ea month

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY 11455-101 St (488-5742) or contact 7@hivedmonton.com • Programs and support services for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and related illnesses. Counselling, referrals, support groups, harm reduction, education, advocacy and public awareness campaigns

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu ea month (fall/winter terms): Speaker Series, Contact Kris (kwall@ualberta.ca)

LIVING POSITIVE 404, 10408-124 St, www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-5768) • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Every Tue (7-9pm): Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELEINE SANAM FOUNDATION 101 St, Jean, 8406 Marie-Anne Gaboury (91 St) Rm 3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV-AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • Every 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) • Free (member/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB Roost, 10345-104 St (387-3343) • Crossdressers, transsexuals, friends and supporters meet the 1st and 3rd each month (8pm): http://groups.yahoo.com/group/admonton_illusions/

IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB Allendale School, 6415-108 St (499-9776) www.imagesab.ca • Meets every 2nd and 4th Thu (8pm) each month featuring presentations, speakers, workshops, outings, monthly and year-end competitions. Photographers of all levels are welcome • \$40 (individual membership)/\$50 (family)/\$20 (full-time student) • visitors may attend three times before joining

JASPER PLACE REVITALIZATION Britannia School, 16018-104 Ave (444-5417) • Meeting with the City of Edmonton • Thu, May 18 (7-9pm)

MEDITATION • Gaden Samten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society, 11403-101 St, www.gadenSamtenling.org (909-0014) by Kushok Lobsang Dharmachok: beginner Tue (7pm), intermediate Wed (7pm); advanced Sun (11am-1pm) • **Buddha Samadhi World Spiritual Organization**, 208-10132-105 St, 1025-1050 www.bsws.org, Raja Yoga Meditation

PAINT PAINT Orange Hair, 10335-94 Ave (497-5862) • Sat, May 19 (1pm-4pm) • \$10/2-50 (ink 2)

POINT TALK (481-1292) Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton offers support groups and workshops for parents at various city locations

SELF EXTREM SUPPORT GROUP (496-5930) • For women who are experiencing crisis as a result of a life crisis and who feel isolated • Group meets each week

THE SNAKE, WIND AND BONNET PLUME Aviation Hangar, 11410 Kingsway Ave (432-9867) • Featuring images, art, and songs inspired by the Yukon's Three Rivers presented on film by Jeff Paupre • Sat, May 12 (6:30pm show, 8pm (music and art) • \$30 (door)/\$25 (adv) at Earth's General Store, CPAWS, MEC, Wildwood General Store, Megatunes, and TIX on the Square

UBA'S CORE VALUES AND MAJOR THEMES Rm 129, Education South Bldg, U of A Campus • Lecture by Dr. Mayan • Fri, May 11 (7pm) • Free

TOASTMASTERS CLUBS • City Lights Toastmasters (426-5667) Set your own pace to become a comfortable and confident public speaker; meetings every Tue (noon)

WOMEN'S TEA ROOM Chamber of Commerce, 600, 9990 Jasper Ave (459-5206) • Visit us and learn how to deliver effective

presentations, conduct business meetings, and develop as a communicator and a leader; every Thu (6pm) • **Womanspace** Beverly United Church meeting room, 11819-40 St (476-9933) Improve speaking skills, leadership skills, time management, organizational, listening and social skills; every Wed (7-9pm) • **Parsons Best** Western Cedar Park Inn, 5116 Gateway Boulevard (457-0608) www.parsons.org weekly meetings to improve your communication and leadership skills in a supportive environment every Wed (7-9pm) • **Chemicalise Toastmasters** Kingsway Rm, Millard Health Building, 131 Airport Rd (496-4608/474-1138) Thu meetings (7-8:30am) feel confident speaking and build leadership skills

TOINETTE SYNDROME Academy of King Edward, 8525-101 St, North door (1-866-824-9764) • Support meetings for TS adults and parents of TS kids • First Wed each month (7pm)

VEGETARIANS OF ALBERTA Riverdale Community Hall, 9231-100 Ave (988-2713/486-1448) • Monthly potluck, bring a vegetarian dish for six, your own cutlery and crockery • Sun, May 13 (5:30pm) • \$2 (member)/\$3 (non-member)

WASKAHEGAN TRAIL ASSOCIATION • (435-6444) Free guided hike, approx. 11 km at Ord Lake, May 13 (9am) meet by the Bonnie Doon Recycle, 85 St, 85 Ave • (466-3567) Free guided hike, approx. 9.5km at Saunders Lake; May 20 (9am); meet by the Bonnie Doon Recycle, 85 St, 85 Ave

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil every 1st and 3rd Sat ea month, stand in silence for a world without violence (10-11am)

QUEER LISTINGS

AFFIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER Red Deer (403-347-6073) • Affirm welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family, and allies, meet at Sunnybrook United Church every 2nd Tue ea month (7pm)

ASAPE Faculty of Education, U of A Campus • Sex, sexual, gender differences in education and culture focus group • Contact Dr. Andre Grace (andra.grace@ualberta.ca) for info

BISEXUAL WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bwmdmonton> • Social group for bi-curious and bisexual women • 2nd Thu ea month (7:30pm)

BOOTS & SADDLES 10242-106 St (423-5014) • Large tavern with pool tables, restaurant, shows. Members only

BUDDY'S NITE CLUB 11725B Jasper Ave (488-7736) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDiva and Donatella NE1 in the GoDonna Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fallow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ Sexyxx Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fallow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'am famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and tourney, DJ Arrowchaser

DOWN UNDER MENS BATH HOUSE 12224 Jasper Ave (482-7960) • Open 24/7 • www.gayedmonton.com

EDMONTON MUSIC NIGHT • A mature social group, couples and singles welcome • E-mail edmontonmusicnight@hotmail.com for more info

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 St • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common social interests meet every 2nd Sunday of most months at 2:30pm for a social period, a short meeting and a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. email edmontontimers@yahoo.ca

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION www.edmontonrbba.org • Monthly after business mixer. Network and share contacts in the GLBT business community • Second Weds ea month

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY 11455-101 St (488-5742) or contact 7@hivedmonton.com • Programs and support services for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and related illnesses. Counselling, referrals, support groups, harm reduction, education, advocacy and public awareness campaigns

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu ea month (fall/winter terms): Speaker Series, Contact Kris (kwall@ualberta.ca)

LIVING POSITIVE 404, 10408-124 St, www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-5768) • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Every Tue (7-9pm): Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELEINE SANAM FOUNDATION 101 St, Jean, 8406 Marie-Anne Gaboury (91 St) Rm 3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV-AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • Every 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) • Free (member/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB Roost, 10345-104 St (387-3343) • Crossdressers, transsexuals, friends and supporters meet the 1st and 3rd each month (8pm): http://groups.yahoo.com/group/admonton_illusions/

IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB Allendale School, 6415-108 St (499-9776) www.imagesab.ca • Meets every 2nd and 4th Thu (8pm) each month featuring presentations, speakers, workshops, outings, monthly and year-end competitions. Photographers of all levels are welcome • \$40 (individual membership)/\$50 (family)/\$20 (full-time student) • visitors may attend three times before joining

JASPER PLACE REVITALIZATION Britannia School, 16018-104 Ave (444-5417) • Meeting with the City of Edmonton • Thu, May 18 (7-9pm)

MEDITATION • Gaden Samten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Society, 11403-101 St, www.gadenSamtenling.org (909-0014) by Kushok Lobsang Dharmachok: beginner Tue (7pm), intermediate Wed (7pm); advanced Sun (11am-1pm) • **Buddha Samadhi World Spiritual Organization**, 208-10132-105 St, 1025-1050 www.bsws.org, Raja Yoga Meditation

PAINT PAINT Orange Hair, 10335-94 Ave (497-5862) • Sat, May 19 (1pm-4pm) • \$10/2-50 (ink 2)

POINT TALK (481-1292) Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton offers support groups and workshops for parents at various city locations

SELF EXTREM SUPPORT GROUP (496-5930) • For women who are experiencing crisis as a result of a life crisis and who feel isolated • Group meets each week

THE SNAKE, WIND AND BONNET PLUME Aviation Hangar, 11410 Kingsway Ave (432-9867) • Featuring images, art, and songs inspired by the Yukon's Three Rivers presented on film by Jeff Paupre • Sat, May 12 (6:30pm show, 8pm (music and art) • \$30 (door)/\$25 (adv) at Earth's General Store, CPAWS, MEC, Wildwood General Store, Megatunes, and TIX on the Square

UBA'S CORE VALUES AND MAJOR THEMES Rm 129, Education South Bldg, U of A Campus • Lecture by Dr. Mayan • Fri, May 11 (7pm) • Free

TOASTMASTERS CLUBS • City Lights Toastmasters (426-5667) Set your own pace to become a comfortable and confident public speaker; meetings every Tue (noon)

WOMEN'S TEA ROOM Chamber of Commerce, 600, 9990 Jasper Ave (459-5206) • Visit us and learn how to deliver effective

STEAMWORLD 11745 Jasper Ave (451-5554) • Steam baths open daily (24hrs)

WOMONSPACE (780-482-1794) • A non-profit lesbian organization, organized activities held monthly including licenced non-smoking dances, coffee houses, family events, games nights, golf tournaments and more • www.gayacana.com/womospace, e-mail: womospace@gmail.com

WOODY'S 11723 Jasper Ave (488-6557) • Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tizzy and Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

SPECIAL EVENTS

ANIMAL CANCER THERAPY SUBSIDIZATION SOCIETY'S DOG WASH Arf 'n' Annies, Laundro-Mutt, Sham-Pooches, A Bit Like Home, Warm and Fuzzy, For Paws, Wags that Brag (732-3522) • Sat,

Should you quit taking that S-S-arghhh-I?

ADVICE

ALT.SEX.COLUMN

ANDREA NEMERSON
altsex@altsexcolumn.com

DEAR MORE

Your boyfriend appears to be what they used to call "neurasthenic," rather languid and wan with a nervous temperament and a tendency toward fainting spells and melancholy. He would have been fed on beef tea and lightly poached eggs on toast, and sent back to bed (alone!) to sleep it off for a month or two.

Sadly, this sort of rest-cure is no longer available to us, so we must make do with modern substitutes: Jamba Juice and gym memberships. He really does sound somewhat undernourished, and I bet you're right about the exercise. Perhaps if he got his blood pumping on occasion, other forms of pumping would ensue.

While it's possible that his low-ish libido is a hormone thing, it isn't particularly likely. My best guess is that he's just different from (some) other guys and different from you. You probably needn't be concerned about him dropping dead from whatever's keeping his libido low. You're

not being selfish; this is serious. It's likely to be you doing the compromising, so make sure you can before you promise anything permanent.

Couples perfectly matched in appetite are fairly rare, actually. Most people are adjusting a wee bit up or down all the time, and it's hardly worth noticing until it gets to be like one of those science-fiction plots where one person's running super-fast and the other's in normal time and they can't see each other. We must resist the temptation to declare our partners functional or dysfunctional by the degree to which their sexual desires match our own. Nor does it matter if he's "normal" by others' standards. He's fine, for him. It's up to you to decide how fine that is with you.

LOVE, ANDREA

DEAR ANDREA

I'm currently taking an SSRI called Citalopram (aka Celexa). My problem is I can't

have an orgasm. My sex drive is low compared to normal but not nonexistent; with my boyfriend in my bed I can still get turned on. I can get so close to orgasm it feels like it must be about to happen, but somehow it never does, no matter how hard we both try.

I considered stopping the medication, but I've tried numerous antidepressants and this is the only one that's allowed me to lead a normal life. I'm reluctant to sacrifice my mental health for my sex life, but I hate having to choose between the two. Can you help?

LOVE, NOT HAPPENIN'

DEAR NOT

Aaaaarggggh!

So frustrating. I think you're right to rank your general mental health above your sex life, but then again a rotten sex life when you used to have a good one is pretty depressing in itself. On top of that, there are armies of people in exactly your

situation and no definite fix, so, aaaarggggh.

I've got three semi-half-assed suggestions (I wish I had a better one). The first is patience, since the side-effects often wear off with time. The second is Wellbutrin, either alone or in addition, which is actually the solution for a lot of people, but I fear you may already have tried it.

The third involves getting various degrees of weird. You could apply something or take something to increase clitoral sensitivity—maybe a pump or other sensitizing toy?—or Viagra, which "they" still say doesn't work for women but many women disagree, or alprostidil if you can track any down. And then there are creams containing L-arginine or some such, which purport to aid arousal and, who knows, probably don't but occasionally appear to. None of these will hurt you (unless contraindicated for some reason; do your homework) and they won't make you more depressed, so what's to lose?

LOVE, ANDREA

Volunteer pottery instructor needed for Strathcona Place Senior Citizen Centre. For info phone Rita Mittelstaedt, 433-5807.

Initiative Ambassadeurs pour la Paix is looking for francophone volunteers. Come learn how to present interactive workshops on antiracism/cultural diversity. Karina at (780)425-1644 ext 9 or kczewski@naar.org

Volunteers needed for A Taste of Edmonton Festival. July 19-22, free food and other benefits. Call Lisa, 423-2822 ext. 22, e-mail: suzanne@eventsedmonton.ca

Calling all campers, outdoor enthusiasts, walkers/runners, to participate in the Canadian Cancer Society's

Relay for Life on May 25-26, 7pm-7am. Call (780)

455-7181 or www.cancer.ca/relay for info.

Volunteer at Edmonton Chants, Edmonton's francophone music festival, June 22-24 at Maurice-Lavallee School's park. Contact Lucille Tailieu, 469-4401, email info@edmontonchante.ab.ca

Seeking volunteers to research, organize and conduct speaking engagements and man exhibits to promote volunteer opportunities at Meals on Wheels. 429-2020, www.mealsonwheeledsmonton.org for info.

May 10, 2007

2007

Volunteer watercolor instructor

needed for

Strathcona Place Senior Centre. For more info call Rita

Mittelstaedt, 433-5807.

Volunteer yoga instructor

needed for Strathcona

Place Senior Citizen Centre. For info phone Rita

Mittelstaedt, 433-5807.

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Volunteer teachers

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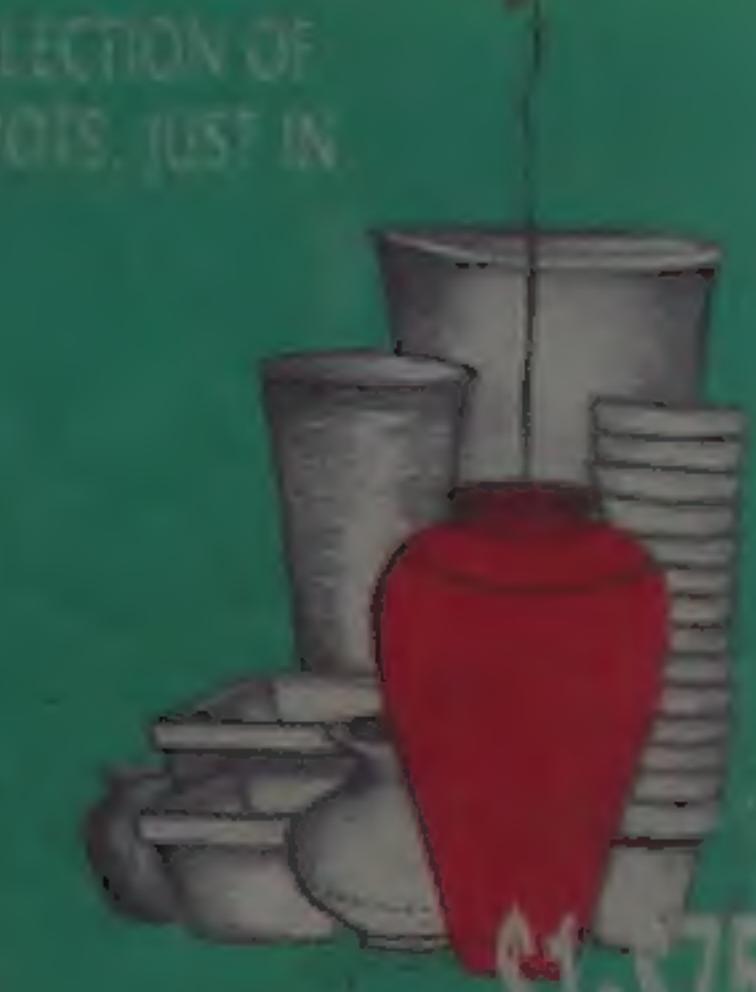
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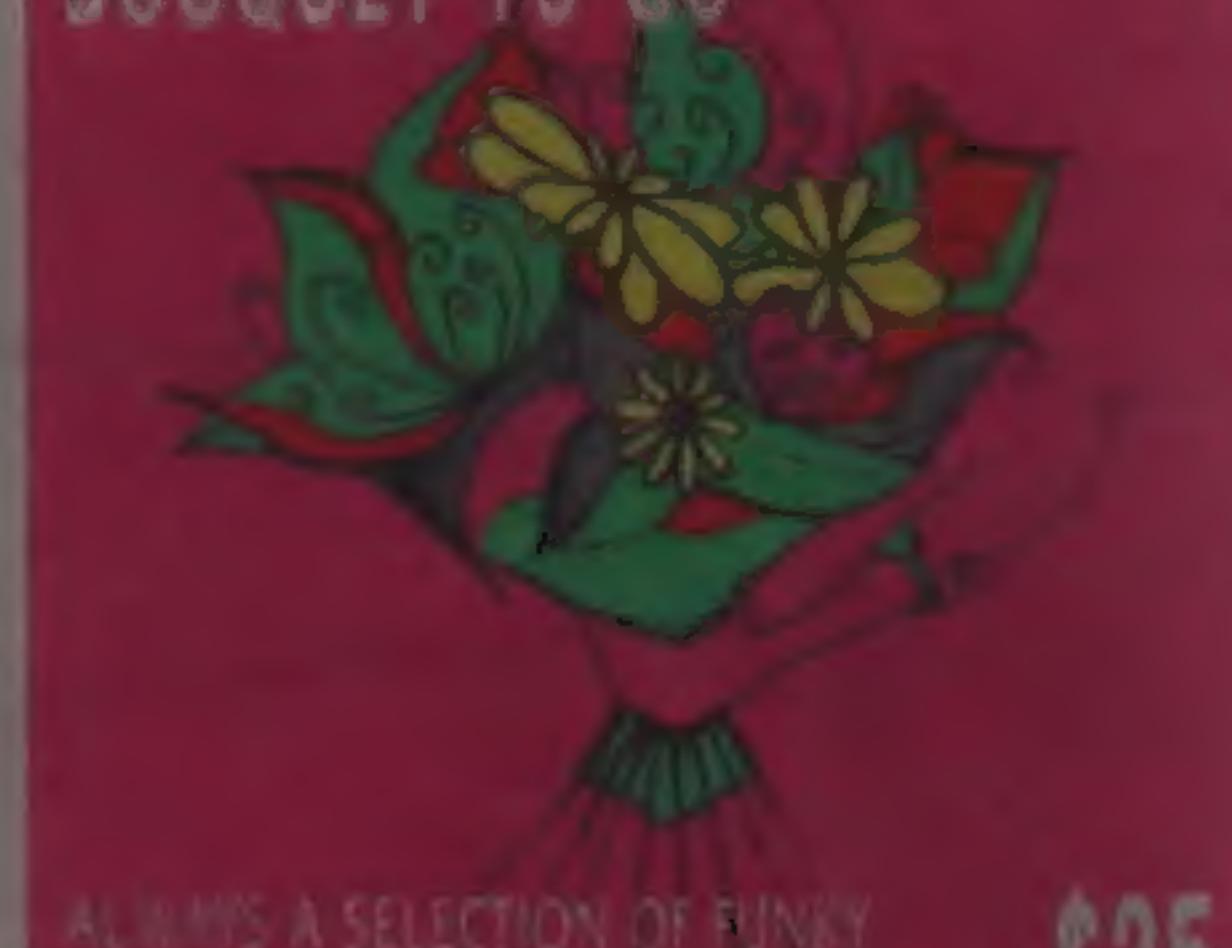
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